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DRUMMER BOY
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DRUMMER BOY OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK

ROBERT HENRY HENDERSHOT;

OR, THE BRAVE

Drummer Boy of the Rappahannock.

BY WILLIAM SUMNER DODGE,

AUTHOR OF "CHRONICLES OF THE ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND;" "A WAIF OF THE WAR,"
ETO., ETC.

"Ne'er waved beneath the golden sun,
A lovelier banner for the brave,
Than that our bleeding fathers won,
And proudly to their children gave;
Nor earth a fairer gem can bring,
Or Freedom claim a brighter scroll,
Than that to which our free hearts cling—
The flag which lights the freeman's soul."

ANONYMOUS.

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1867.

1867
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CITY OF WASHINGTON

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P R E F A C E.

THE object of writing this narrative is two-fold: First, to preserve, in the annals of our country, the record of a brave boy's deeds—a record so illustrious for one so young, that his name has long since been trumpeted to an enduring fame; and, secondly, to afford those desirous of procuring such a record, an opportunity. And here I may say, that I have aimed to present facts as they are, clothed simply in language that may make those facts interesting to the reader. I have not sought to embellish, or overdraw. And while guarding against mere superficial statements, unsupported by accurate information, I have also endeavored to deal with my subject fairly and impartially; presenting, it is true, in bold relief, the nobler elements in his nature, and yet not concealing those habits and actions, which, by contrast, make the picture more perfect.

Adrift it is cast—a waif upon the great sea of literature—with the earnest hope that ere it sinks to the depths of the forgotten and the unknown, it shall serve its purpose, by implanting in the breasts of our present youth, the seed of a still purer and nobler patriotism, which shall inure into a staple growth, at once the honor and the shield of our common liberties.

WM. SUMNER DODGE.

WASHINGTON, D.C., *December 1, 1866.*

L E T T E R S.

WASHINGTON, August 31, 1864.

His Excellency ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States:

Will you permit me to recommend Robert Henry Hendershot, the Drummer Boy of the Rappahannock, to a cadetship at the West Point Military School? He earnestly desires to acquire a military education, and his youthful promise as a brave defender of his country, would seem to make his application one deserving especial consideration.

The selection of this lad for such a favor by the Chief Executive may well inspire the youth of the country with a spirit of emulation in the military service, and meet with commendation from all patriotic people.

With sentiments of great respect,

I am, your obedient servant,

F. E. SPINNER,
Treasurer of the United States.

His Excellency ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

It affords me the greatest pleasure to testify to the great gallantry and loyalty of young Hendershot. He served under me for some time; and at the battle of Fredericksburg displayed most distinguished courage.

A. E. BURNSIDE, *Major General.*

LETTERS.

V.

ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES,
CITY POINT, VA., January 14, 1865.

I would most respectfully recommend this boy for a cadetship at the West Point Military Academy, during the ensuing year.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant General.*

I cheerfully concur in the above recommendation.

GEORGE G. MEADE, *Major General.*

Robert Henry Hendershot entered the service as a Drummer Boy of the Ninth Michigan Infantry, in 1861. He was always brave, gallant and worthy. He is of the proper metal to make a good soldier.

J. G. PARKEHURST,
Late Colonel Ninth Michigan Infantry.

I know the Drummer Boy, and cheerfully concur in the good opinion expressed in his favor.

J. R. SMITH,
Lieut. Colonel U. S. A., Q. M. Dept. Ohio.

The bearer, the Drummer Boy of the Rappahannock, is deserving of the gratitude of the American people.

H. G. EASTMAN.

I fully concur in the above.

P. H. SMITH,
Vice President Chicago and North-western R. R.

TREASURY OF THE UNITED STATES,

WASHINGTON, January 1, 1865.

Robert Henry Hendershot is now a messenger in my office. For the six months or more he has been in my office he has conducted himself with the utmost propriety. Aside from the reports of his good conduct in the military service of which I have heard, I have seen evidence of his great personal bravery. I think him made for military service.

F. E. SPINNER.

As a citizen of Michigan, I am proud of this boy.

R. N. RICE,
General Supt. Michigan Central Railroad.

I know something of this boy, and believe he is very brave, manly and worthy.

A. LINCOLN.

I concur in the above.

E. O. C. ORD, *Major General.*

CHAPTER I.

PATRIOTISM, or love of country, is one of the cardinal virtues of every true heart. It has been recognized as the crowning glory of generous manhood and womanhood in all ages and in all countries. Through all history, from the dawn of civilized and even barbaric life to this present day, mankind have declared it, written it, acted it, vindicated it at all times, under all circumstances, through good report and evil report, at the council fires of the untutored savage, in the patriarchal circles of Eastern lands, in the household, in the forum, the legislative halls of States and Nations, and amid the carnage and wreck of battles. It shines forth from the lore of the ancient and mediæval commonwealths,—

from Greece, and Italy, and Geneva ; from the utterances of Demosthenes and Cicero, Bodinas and Machiavel ; of Calvin and Luther ; of Sidney and Rousseau ; of Voltaire, D'Alembert and Diderot ; of Blackstone and Locke.

This spirit of patriotism, thus inculcated and nurtured, imbued the souls of those noble men, who, crossing "the desperate winter sea," established our colonial life, carried their descendants triumphantly through the sea of revolutionary strife, and enabled them to found a grand Republic of States, based upon that lofty principle, derived directly from Nature and Nature's God —that creed so broad and so grand—that every man is the equal, before the law, of every other man ; that every man has an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ; that the conscience should be unfettered ; that

the people are the source of power, and the good of the people the sole object of government itself.

It was this patriotism, this love of country and free institutions, which prompted James Otis, Patrick Henry, and John Adams, to utter words for freedom that quivered with the electricity of lightning, and burned deathless into a million of hearts, flashed defiantly against despotism from a million of eyes, and formed an army of bayonets, which, to use the expressive eloquence of Adams, should resist all attempts of George III. "to forge chains long enough and strong enough to reach around these States." And this patriotism, this love of our country and free institutions, has never waned, never ebbed and left barren the hearts of our people, since those eventful days of revolution, blood

and triumph. It has formed an elemental, component part, in all our constitutional policy, in all our party organizations, in all our successive treaties, voyages and discoveries, in all our campaigns and victories over foreign nations. It is taught by the mother to the infant on her knee; it is nourished in the mother's milk; it is instilled into the youthful heart in the tales of our revolutionary sires—the stories of the great and good Washington, of Warren, and Putnam, and Greene, and Wayne; of DeKalb, and Kosciusko, and Lafayette—citizens of foreign lands but heroes in the cause of liberty. It displays itself in our school-books, and in our local and national histories. It is evinced in the pride with which we hail the "starry emblem of our nationality," as glitteringly and gloriously it is borne aloft by militia soldiery on

training days and upon all public occasions. It bubbles spontaneously from the heart as we listen to the soul-stirring melody and sentiment of our national songs. It glows radiant, jocund and defiant, as we spread open the map of America, and comprehend her vast expanse of territory, her millions of people, her resources of wealth and power, her commerce, inland and on the seas, penetrating everywhere under the sun; her great names and her great days; her loving heart and her hospitable welcome, extending the promise of domicile and plenty to the oppressed of the world.

These things, these realities, and these remembrances, have all combined to preserve and strengthen patriotism in the American heart, and thereby the sustenance and perpetuity of the national life.

Is it strange, that under such a growth of ideas and sentiment, the mass of the American people, especially those descended from the Puritanic stock of Pilgrim Rock, should rally with a vigor unparalleled in the history of the world, to save the Republic founded by their fathers, and under which they had lived so long, enjoying so much of life and freedom, of happiness and protection, when a portion of our people, descendants, too, from the colonial founders at Jamestown, influenced and maddened by mean, ambitious men, sought to subvert that grand Empire of States, bound together and for all time by the Federal Constitution, which all the people had declared was, and ever should be, their supreme law?

The convictions and earnest aspirations of all lovers of our common country, were for the

maintenance of the Federal Government; and “Let us fight for the Union!” was the rallying cry of the gathering hosts. The Churches of all denominations thundered on behalf of the cause of the Union. The Colleges of our country joined the Churches in their appeal for National Unity. And the Literature of the land, in its thousand forms, spoke trumpet-tongued for the continued integrity of the “government bequeathed to us by our beloved sires.”

Thus, as in the olden time, was the great Northern heart nerved to battle. The South, intent on the ruin of the national government, the structure moulded by the wisdom of the greatest patriots of earth, and baptized and sanctified by a perilous and bloody war—a structure grander far than Ephesian temple—refusing all concessions, all compromises, all conventions of the people, and

every amicable settlement of their supposed difficulties, declared for no peaceful arbitration, but threw down at the feet of the Northern people the unsheathed sword—symbol of war.

With a sorrowing heart, but a firm, undying purpose, the North accepted the challenge, and the tocsin of war sounded through the length and breadth of the land. Everywhere were seen the camp-fires of our citizen soldiery. In city, and town, and village, were constantly heard the drum and fife summoning patriots to action. Thousands and tens of thousands of fathers, mothers, sisters and sweethearts, were bidding an affectionate, and alas! far too often, an eternal farewell to fathers, husbands, brothers and lovers, hastening to the fields of carnage and glory. The best manhood and the noblest youth of our country rushed to the rescue. The war con-

stantly assumed greater proportions, its terrors and its dangers increased, and for four long years the cause of the Union oscillated, pendulum like, victory now perching on Union and anon on rebel banner, until at last, God smiling upon us, the Right was maintained, the Republic vindicated, and Liberty secured in reality as well as in name.

CHAPTER II.

AMONG those who became distinguished in the history of the Great Rebellion was a lad of twelve summers, who, inspired with noble impulses to serve his country in its hour of peril, early in the war won the admiration of the soldiers and the people by his display of indomitable courage and high chivalric spirit.

ROBERT HENRY HENDERSHOT, the brave Drummer Boy of the Rappahannock, was born in Cambridge, Michigan, on the 11th day of December, 1850, and is the son of worthy parents. His father died when he was quite an infant. In 1860, his mother moved to Jackson City, Michigan, where, she being very poor, he did what he

could to earn his own clothes, peddling fruit and pop-corn on the Jackson and Adrian passenger trains, and blacking boots for any person who would give him a dime. The money he thus earned, beyond what was necessary to purchase raiment for himself, he gave to his mother for safe-keeping. Occasionally he would extend his sphere of traffic to Detroit. Thus he became well known to the employees of the railroad, and was quite popular with them. Although of a disposition naturally good, kind-hearted, and fond of his mother, he nevertheless, owing to his mingling at such an early age among men of rambling, reckless disposition, acquired to some extent their habits and inclinations, which he frequently gratified by running away from home, generally by getting into the good graces of persons connected with circus companies; and

once he accompanied, for some time, Dan. Rice's famous show, wherein he became quite an expert in feats of tumbling; in fact he was up to everything which presented novelty and excitement.

In the spring and summer of 1861, his mother, realizing the lack of an education in herself, and knowing the importance of it in children growing up to take their places in the world, persuaded Henry to attend one of the public schools in the city, urging him to be diligent in his studies and strive to fit himself for a clerkship in a store; telling him if he would learn and be an honest, steady boy, he might sometime become a merchant and have a store of his own, gain wealth and live in easy circumstances, like many around him.

This kind counsel and appeal of the mother

deeply impressed the boy, and he attended school regularly, and really did his utmost to acquire the education which unquestionably he so much needed. All at once the cry of war resounded through the land, striking momentary terror into the hearts of our people. Business was suspended. Stores and workshops were closed, the hum of the factory was stilled, the plow was left in the partly-turned furrow;—all was intense excitement, for the telegraph proclaimed everywhere that our Southern countrymen, maddened into desperation by mean, ambitious men, wild in the belief that their rights, under the Federal Government, were assailed and threatened with destruction, had, on the 12th day of April defied the national authorities, by an assault upon Fort Sumter; which, after a terrible resistance of thirty odd hours, had been

forced to yield, and the "Stars and Stripes," that emblem of pride which never before in the history of the nation had been humbled by a foe, was lowered, and that another flag, the symbol of secession, with a palmetto and a serpent, flaunted in its place.

It is not to be wondered at that an event which overthrew the equanimity of the most sober citizens, should equally affect the excitable mind of a youth who had ever been ready for any wild and romantic undertaking. In Jackson City, as everywhere else in the loyal north, troops were being recruited under the call of the President for seventy-five thousand volunteers, and daily the piping of the fife and the beating of the drum were heard throughout the town. Companies of men were hastily formed and marched away to the *points d'appui*—Washington

in the East and Cairo in the West. And the juveniles in the town, imbued also with martial ardor, organized a soldier company, paraded the streets with their wooden guns, displaying all the pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war! Henry, although entirely ignorant of the nature of war, its causes, consequences or the object to be attained, nevertheless, felt the witching spell with which the very mention of war affects the ambitious mind, and possessing some heroic ingredients in his composition, heartily wished success to the soldiers, and longed himself to serve as a volunteer. But all his efforts in this direction met with a cold repulse, the plea in bar of his suit being his extreme youth.

Henceforth school had no pleasures for him, and it was impossible to keep him in it. Never was there a greater truant. The dream of war,

the ambition for a soldier's glory, had filled the measure of his soul, to the exclusion of everything else; nor could the lore of the school, the talk of friends, the entreaties, the remonstrances, or the whippings by the mother, in the least affect his resolution to himself become a soldier boy.

The national call for troops being speedily filled, the excitement somewhat subsided, and business again revived with an impetus perfectly astonishing. War had its demands, and every shuttle, forge and hammer leaped and rang as if themselves feeling the inspiration. The Government and the people were determined to crush the rebellion, and deemed the force already called out a sufficient one to consummate the work. How little they knew of the nature of

treason! How poorly they read the horoscope of the future!

Although the people, deluded in the strength of the "mighty republic," at this juncture in public affairs, and hugging to their bosoms the delusion that the struggle impending was simply the rebellion of a few fanatics and their dupes, and could be crushed as easily as was the Whisky Revolt, or Shay's Rebellion, had resumed their wonted avocations with that calm contentment incident to strong faith,—still the martial spirit evoked by the events of April had taken deep root in the hearts of the youth, and in Jackson, as in hundreds of other places, they resolved themselves into, as they then thought, permanent companies, seeming to comprehend, in some measure, the magnitude the conflict would assume, while declaring that "they would yet

be big enough to carry *real* guns, and *shoot* them, too, before the war ended." How true this utterance proved to be, the country knows, alas! too well.

Henry joined the little company of soldier boys formed in his town, and soon became their drummer. He got an old drum, and practiced upon it so continually that the neighbors became disgusted, and took it away from him several times; but the captain of the company as often had it returned; finally, he, too, tired of the noise, and told the ambitious drummer that he must give it up, but that he might become a fifer for the company, if he could procure the instrument. His ambition again aroused, he told his captain he could get one. But how? that was the question. He had no money himself at this time, nor would his mother give him any,

for she was opposed to the whole scheme of his becoming a soldier. At last he hit upon a happy expedient, and proceeded to execute it. A Mr. Kingsley owned a music store in the town, and had a variety of wind and string instruments for sale. Upon him the would-be fifer resolved to play his stratagem. So he presented the matter to him, urging the necessity of his having a fife to play upon that night at the meeting of the company, and that he had no money with which to pay for it. Mr. Kingsley thereupon kindly loaned him the fife, he agreeing to return it at once. Here was a triumph; and, no doubt, Henry honestly intended to return it as he had promised; but becoming enamored with it, and proud now in the title of fifer, he clung to it, evading Mr. Kingsley constantly, hoping every day, for weeks, that by some hook or crook he

might get three dollars and discharge the obligation which he now felt that he had incurred. Besides, his sense of guiltiness kept increasing, and his studious avoidance of his patron only served to bring about exactly the reverse of what he wished—the concealment from his mother of the fact that he held wrongful possession of the fife. For Mr. Kingsley, after several weeks, finding that the boy avoided him, so that he could get no explanation of his conduct, or the motive that inspired him so to act, and knowing his mother, naturally related the circumstance to her. She, of course, expressed great surprise at the conduct of her son, told him that she knew nothing of the matter, and furthermore, that he had not been home for fully two weeks, and that she wished some one would bring him to her. Mr. Kingsley kindly informed her of his

whereabouts, and she immediately started down town to find him. She met him on the street and called him, but he ran away as fast as possible. The reason of his running from home was that his mother, having exhausted her patience, and finding that neither her entreaties nor threats could induce him to attend school, had on several occasions made hearty applications of birch by way of enforcing her counsels. However much we may deprecate the result, it is a fact that these punishments only added fuel to the flame of his excitable and now perverse disposition. She then proceeded to an old barn, the rendezvous of the company, and arranged a plan with them for his capture, and returned home. Henry soon after visited the barn, when his comrades told him his mother had been for him, and that he ought to be

ashamed to treat her so, and that they would turn him out of the company if he did not go home. He stoutly refused to go, when some of them said they would take him to his mother by force. Then ensued angry words, soon resulting in a quarrel, in which our hero was sadly worsted. But they did not succeed in placing him in the custody of his mother. Foiled again in her attempt to catch him, the mother applied to a policeman for aid, and he succeeded in his effort, although it cost him a hard race, but being the fleeter of foot he came out victor. When he had thus been safely delivered into the hands of the mother, she requested that the policeman should hold him until she could procure a rope and tie him. This was soon accomplished. She then displayed a rawhide, which she had bought purposely for the occasion, and

said to him, "What do you think of yourself, now?" He replied very sulkily, "Nothing," whereupon she proceeded to flog him most vigorously, he meantime screaming with all his might; but neither cries nor shrieks were of any avail in his case, and the louder he cried, the harder and faster came the blows. Nearly, if not quite, an hour she inflicted this castigation, and only ceased from sheer exhaustion. She then commanded him to fall upon his knees and ask her forgiveness. When he hesitated to do this extreme act of penitence, she threatened to keep him tied up until he did, and the thought of this kind of imprisonment forced him to yield, and he asked pardon as required. But this even did not procure his release; for his mother, feeling that the fear of continued punishment, and not a contrite heart, had influenced him to ask for-

giveness, kept him confined with the cord for a week afterwards, during which time she treated him in the most approved prison style, his sustenance being solely a bread and water diet. Now there can be no doubt that this punishment was severe; but the errors of the youth were very grievous, and undoubtedly merited a heavy penalty. But it would be a great wrong to attribute these proceedings to any passion in the heart of the mother. Clearly she saw the natural perversity of her son's disposition, and had become satisfied that kind words were of no avail, and that neither promises of reward, nor threats of punishment, could make him better; so, as most mothers would have done, perhaps, in like circumstances, out of the fullness of her love, desiring not triumph nor revenge, but his own good, had felt compelled by her

sense of duty to resort to these extreme measures. And again, that famous Italian proverb, "*The Devil tempts every man, but the Idler tempts the Devil,*" was a favorite truth with the fond mother, for which reason she sought to force him to school, thereby allowing him no leisure for bad company or the formation of bad habits. Thus, while some might denounce the measures she tried in this behalf, no one should condemn the motive which impelled her to them.

Nor was this punishment without good results, for, after loosing him, his mother clad him neatly and packed him off to school again, which he continued to attend steadily for more than a month, making rapid progress in his studies. He was kindly encouraged by his teacher, who used gentle means only, to instill into his mind a love for books.

But, alas! in the midst of this career of reformation and learning, came the sad news of our defeat at Bull Run, on that fatal 21st of July—that first great battle in which we had hoped to have gained all, but under the ruling of the God of Battles had seemed to have lost all;—that great battle, following which a nation's *miserere* was tolled from innumerable church-towers over the nation's dead, and the clouds of gloom and despair settled all over the land. But this shock in battle, though ever so great, could not crush the hopes of the American people, or incline them to considerations of peace, compromise, or an acknowledgment of the independence of the so-called Southern Confederacy. It only served to arouse the North to a pitch of excitement, in comparison with which the former call for men was like the current of a tiny brook beside the

tidal waves of the mighty ocean. Where troops had gone forth before in regiments, they now went in divisions.

In this renewed demonstration of popular enthusiasm, all the passions and ardor of Henry's youthful heart,—which had not been annihilated, but only slumbered,—burst forth with redoubled violence and energy of purpose, and again all his old habits of running away from school, and absenting himself from home, returned upon him, and naturally and inevitably he ran into further trouble. For his mother again resorted to the rod as the panacea for his ills; but the boy's temper was more aggravated by another event that occurred just at this time, and which is worth narrating. His mother had been whipping him, when a brother-in-law stepped in, and she asked his advice as to what she should do with

him. He replied, "I will give him something by which to remember me." The boy then said, "You are a fool," and immediately this intermeddler in other people's affairs gave him another whipping, and a severer one by far than he had ever before received. The whipping ended, being maddened to desperation, Henry ran out of the house and down town, resolved on never going home again. Whither he should escape, or how, he neither knew nor cared. Friendless, as he thought, and penniless, he slept in a barn that night, and the next morning jumped upon a passing train bound for Detroit. But here he met with an unexpected difficulty; for the conductor, apprehensive that he was running away, and he not having money to pay his way, refused to take him to Detroit, directing him to return to Jackson, where he lived, and telling him that

he could not disobey orders by passing him over the road free. His appeals made no impression upon the conductor, so he got off at Battle Creek. He remained here several days. Borrowing a fish-pole and line, he angled with considerable success, selling fish enough to pay his fare back to Jackson, and buy all the bread and cheese necessary to satisfy his wants. As for lodgings, he exercised real economy by sleeping, as usual in such emergencies, in a barn.

But this absence from home, in a place where all the people were strangers, and in which he must work so diligently to procure even this precarious subsistence, led him into a train of reflections wherein, after first venting the emotions of passion stirred within him at the thought of the cruelty inflicted upon him by his mean and despicable brother-in-law, as he was pleased

to call him, he began to come a little to him self. His grief now took another turn, gradually dissolving in a flood of tears, until he became at last sufficiently cool to reason with his passions, and seriously to reflect what steps were to be taken in his sad condition. After revolving many schemes of action, all of which seemed formidable to him, he decided to return home, to tell his mother all that he had done, ask her forgiveness, resume school, and in all things deport himself as he ought. It is difficult for any one who has not felt it, to contemplate the calm contentment and rapturous glow of Henry's feelings, as he thus realized that he had gained a noble victory over his passions. Pride now came to his relief, and happiness, perfect almost, possessed him, the only drawback being a feeling of resentment towards his brother-in-law, for

his unwarrantable interference on the occasion to which we have adverted. And, indeed, no one can condemn this dislike, when he reflects what human nature is, and how prone some persons are, because they are of some kin to others, to think that this relationship or affinity gives them absolute right to interfere in all family matters, whether these matters relate to themselves or entirely to others.

Henry was gladly welcomed home by his mother, who made no threats of punishment as he had expected she would, and upon hearing his story, and promises of future good behavior, only remarked that unless he did behave and go to school, she would not let him have any more good clothes.

He was now, at least for a time, at peace. Contentment was his lot, and when he laid him-

self down to rest that night, he might have said with Cato, in the tragedy—

“ _____ let guilt or fear
Disturb man's rest: Cato knows neither of them ;
Indifferent in his choice to sleep or die.”

How long this serenity continued, and how well he kept his promises, will be known as we proceed with the story

CHAPTER III.

It was the happy autumnal time. The fields were still green, and the forests were dressed in their many-colored garments—the oak in its deep substantial red, the maple in its brighter hue, the chestnut in its variegated green and yellow. The sunshine fell upon them, and all nature smiled with joy. It was just ere winter came to chill and drive away the rich coloring and the gorgeous tints of nature, and subdue the poetic frenzy and bright-winged romance of the imagination and the heart. The spirit of patriotism, which had lain dormant, not dead, in the bosom of our hero, now once more began to strive within him and with increased power. He was

resolved this time to consummate his high hopes, and become no mere player in the drama of war, but a soldier in earnest, ready to dare and to do in the cause of country and of right.

Again some soldiers were being recruited for the army, and as usual they were drilled near the town. Robert asked permission of the Captain to drill with them. The request was granted, and so, procuring one of the wooden guns belonging to the mimic company of boys, he daily performed the task of learning the manual of arms, the facings, marchings, filings and alignments peculiar to the school of the soldier and the company.

Robert was now proud and triumphant. A new life rose up before him. The future was all glorious. He felt that now he was somebody, and with a firm tread he sought to impress

every one else with that fact. No Brigadier General, with his gilded buttons and silver star, could have felt the dignity of his position more than he, the boy with the wooden gun, the ambitious youth of twelve summers.

And again he behaved naughtily by quitting school altogether, forgetting home and mother, causing her to grieve deeply over his wildness and waywardness; she pleading with him to come home, and once more be her darling boy; he refusing, and endeavoring to rouse her imagination up to the high coloring of his own. But she, poor woman, could see no glories in war in which her boy could achieve a name, and only pictured him a mangled corpse on the first battle plain.

Still he remained with the company, eating and sleeping in camp, and to all intents and

purposes a soldier. This company, when filled, was to be attached to the Ninth Michigan Infantry. Its Captain, C. V. Deland, was really a good, kind-hearted man, and proved a worthy officer. One day Robert, whose soul was bent on being a "boy in blue," said to him,

"Captain, won't you enlist me for a soldier?"

He replied, smiling, "No, my boy, I cannot. You are too small; the Government will not accept you; but you may remain here with us and drill until we go away. Then you must go home, for your mother don't wish you to go, and you are too young to go without her consent."

A week or more had passed after this conversation, when one morning a telegram came, directing the company to proceed to Fort Wayne, Indiana, there to rendezvous for a time. Robert's

mind was greatly perturbed. He did not like the idea of running away from home, but he knew full well his mother would not consent. He had begged the Captain to let him go, and had been refused. The thought of now foregoing the realization of all his bright dreams, of thus seeing his castles in the air disappear like dew in the morning sun, was perfectly crushing to his spirit, and for a little while he was convulsed with grief. Then a resolution possessed him; it brightened his heart; it grew stronger with his every thought; it intensified into faith; it inhered within, and emboldened him to attempt an adventure whereby to gain his darling purpose.

And so when the train departed, he secreted himself among the soldiers in one of the cars, for he was become a favorite among them, and

remained hidden away until they reached the point of destination. So far, so safe, thought the boy. But a new danger stared him in the face. The Captain meeting him, insisted that he must go back home. He pleaded to remain, and as an excuse said he had no money. The Captain generously offered to pay his fare back. This was a response which he did not expect or wish to receive. Then he changed his tactics, saying he wished to be a soldier, and if the Captain would let him remain, he would wait upon him, and do everything he wished for him. Finally, the Captain thinking that in all probability the Company would return through Jackson when ordered to the South, consented, resolved that then he should leave him at all events. But he was destined to find his little warrior a persistent fellow, and as hard to get

rid of, though by no means so terrible, as was the "Old Man of the Sea," in the story of Sinbad the Sailor.

The Company, together with others of the regiment, remained encamped at Fort Wayne about a month, and meantime Robert did his duties well, aiding the Captain in every way he could, while he in return treated him with great kindness, allowing him to sleep in his tent, and eat at his mess. While here, occurred another opportunity for the boy to practice the drummer's art, and he improved it by daily going out with the "drum corps," and soon was able to play a tune. The old drum-major encouraged him by declaring he would yet be a proficient, a credit to the profession, and urged him to persevere. Thus flattered, he resolved on becoming a drummer. He was very happy, and he

seemed forgetful that ever there might arise a cloud to darken the sunshine of his joy.

It was drawing near the New Year, when the summons came to move southward to the "Seat of War." With a half melancholy face Robert aided the Captain in packing his carpet-sack, saw with regret the camp broken up, and stillness and desolation creep in where but an hour before all had been life and pleasure. At last, just as the cars were starting, he ventured again to plead his cause, and asked his friend if he could not go with him down south to help fight the rebels. He replied, feeling deeply in sympathy with him, that he might go if his mother was willing. Now his countenance brightened, his wonted cheerfulness returned, and he seemed conscious of coming triumph.

As the train neared the depot at Jackson, a

multitude of people were seen, who had gathered to bid friends a final adieu, and among them Robert quickly discovered his mother, who had come to see if she could once more regain her child. The Captain had said that if his mother consented, he could get upon the next train, which would also be loaded with soldiers bound for the same place, so he would have no difficulty in joining him. Fearing to ask his mother's consent in the presence of the Captain, feeling assured that she would stoutly refuse the request, and failing to procure his influence as an advocate in his cause, he again resorted to a questionable strategy. He embraced her affectionately, and quietly accompanied her home, resolved that if she did refuse to give her permission, he would run away when the next train came along. He soon broached the subject which lay

next his heart, but all his pleadings, all his appeals, all his pictures of the renowned glories of war, made no impression upon her. Her only reply was that he was too young and she could not let him go. Then he calmed down, as if he considered his mother's plea-in-bar a law which he must obey. He lay around the house composedly ; he whistled recklessly and sang scraps of songs with a perfect air of indifference, creating the impression in his mother that he cared but very little whether he went or stayed after all. And thus he threw the good woman off her guard. And when he heard the whistle of the coming train, he innocently remarked that he would just go to the depot to see some of the boys of his acquaintance. And she, poor soul, knowing nothing of the character of the train, was deceived, to her own most

bitter disappointment; for soon after she saw the cars slowly approaching from the depot, and observed that they, too, were filled with soldiers. Apprehension seized her, and she ran towards the track and then beheld, in great sorrow, her boy standing on the rearmost car, waving his handkerchief with the rest, and bidding everybody in general farewell. As the train passed the spot where his mother stood, in tears, he exclaimed, "Don't cry, mother! I'll write you when I get to Louisville." Seeing now that all was over, that he was resolved to go, she simply said, "Good-bye, Robert; *Pray often.*" And so swiftly sped on the cars, while she retraced her steps homeward to hide the grief that pressed her soul to earth. Nor was the heart of the boy hardened, although many of my readers may seem ready to execrate him

for so shamefully treating his mother. I can assure all such that it was no real wickedness of heart, but an earnest, persistent, uncontrollable longing to mingle with the soldiers in the tented field, and himself to be a soldier. He felt in his spirit that high sense of patriotism which Horace expresses in this way—rather poor paraphrase, perhaps, of the original—

“Who would not die in his dear country’s cause !
Since, if base fear his dastard step withdraws,
From death he cannot fly : one common grave
Receives, at last, the coward and the brave.”

And so he kept on the train with the strange regiment, and arrived at Louisville the next morning. The soldiers treated him kindly, and gave him generously of their fare. At that time few men could be found who would discourage any one, no matter how young, from enlisting in the army.

Arriving at Louisville, the regiment he came with was marched through the city and encamped on its southerly border. Hardly were they upon the ground, when our youthful adventurer descried in the distance another encampment of tents, and he made all haste to ascertain if the Ninth Michigan was there. Fortunately, or unfortunately (every one must judge for himself which), he found that command, and at once. Seeing the regimental colors flying midway of a long line of tents, he knew that must be Company C—his favorite company—the one commanded by Captain DeLand. The first man he chanced to meet was the Captain himself, and he appeared greatly surprised at again seeing what he was pleased to style “a perfect little pest.” His surprise over, the Captain asked Robert how he came there. He told him a well-made-up story,

partly true and partly false. The Captain seemed satisfied and took him into his tent. After a time, feeling anxious for the fears of the mother, knowing as he did that her trouble with him was great, he asked him again, and cross-questioned him very much as a lawyer would a witness. The boy, through fear of being sent home, had based his former story on a false foundation ; and now, in the rigid examination he underwent, he diverged widely from his former statements ;—in short, he was caught in what plain-spoken people call a *lie*. The result was a conference between the Captain and his subaltern, Lieutenant Purdy, and a resolution on their part to return him to his mother.

But as Fielding, whom I regard as the truest depicter of poor human nature, says : “ A single bad act no more constitutes a villain in life,

than a single bad part on the stage. The worst of men generally have the words rogue and villain most in their mouths, as the lowest of all wretches are very apt to cry out, Low in the pit." Therefore while we may, and must, condemn the untruths he told, we should mollify that condemnation by the fact that the untruths were not the emanations of a heart base in itself, but the weak fortifications which Satan always proffers to those who distrust the naked truth, when they wish to carry out some passionate ambition of the heart, and are afraid it will be laughed at or crushed out by those upon whom they most depend for its realization.

The very next morning he was put on the train and arrangements were made with the conductor to send him home. The Captain, just before the departure of the train, said to him,

"Will you go home now, and be a good boy?"

The youth, bursting with rage and mortification, concentrated it all in the laconic expletive, "*No, I won't!*"

The Captain replied, "Then I shall tie you, for you've *got to go home*," and procuring a stout cord he did so; and after giving him some money to buy his meals with, and putting him in the special custody of the brakesman, he bade him good-bye, with another imperative injunction not to come back and trouble him any more.

At Indianapolis the baggage-master, out of compassion, untied him and he ran away. When the next train left for the south, he asked the engineer if he would let him ride, telling him that his regiment was at Louisville and that he was a drummer-boy. The engineer said,

“Yes, and welcome, if you have no money.”

Our hero replied, and truly, “I have some money, just enough to buy my meals.”

The engineer then told him that he liked all the boys in blue, and they should never be compelled to walk if he could give them a ride; that he did not go to Louisville, but he would put him in charge of the engineer who would take his place, so that he would reach there safe and sound; and completed his generosity by giving him five dollars to help him along. Again he went whirling over the rail, traveling with winged speed through forests, across prairies, over bridges, under arches, through city and town, with hope, that darling solace! full high advanced, all thoughts bent on the bright side of the future, with never a care for its thick-coming sorrow and gloom.

Had a veritable ghost like that even of Banquo, or such an one as the old popular superstition declares to inhabit the Potter's-field, frightening all good people out of their senses at the simple idea of those once consigned to dust reappearing and pirouetting in the grim ghastliness of death:—had such a shade appeared from the disemboweled earth to the said Captain De Land, his mortification, indignation, and *fright* even, could not have been greater than when, the very next evening, Robert Hendershot stood before him. All entreaties and threats were unavailing. It was evident he would not go, and could not be *sent*, home. So the Captain tried to drive him home by telling him what dreadful things he would do when they should get into a fight; but failing in this to cower his pluck, he resorted to whipping, hoping that

abuse would force him away. This only made the boy very mad, and he declared he would not go home, but would join some other company. The Captain, full of vexation, replied "he did not care where he went, if he only kept out of his company." I hardly think the Captain meant this, for he really liked the boy, and would gladly have had him stay but for the fear that if anything happened to the youth his mother would have considered him to blame. Robert, however, took the Captain at his word, and going to the Captain of Company B, he soon won his good graces and became a servant for him. He now thought he was all right for a soldier, and went with the regiment the next day to West Point, a small but desolate place near the mouth of Salt River, which stream flows into the Ohio some thirty miles south-

west of Louisville. For some two months he served in this way, at first enjoying it greatly, but gradually disliking the whole business.

It was winter, and the weather was peculiar to the climate of Kentucky at such a season; the sun was scarcely visible for weeks; the clouds hung in dark, heavy masses around the horizon, or extended to the zenith with leaden hue, pregnant with rain which drenched the earth for days at a time; the mud was deep and treacherous, the dread of man and of beast; and camp, too, was a perfect monotony, there being no enemy save a few guerillas within a hundred miles or more.

No wonder that in such a climate and amid such dreary surroundings our hero should get homesick and begin heartily to wish himself at home. But this wish could not be granted then,

the Captain said, for on the very day he made the request, the regiment was ordered to Muldrough's Hill. What his ambition had prompted him to, necessity now seemed to demand; and while thus feeling homesick and discouraged, ready for any fate, the Captain offered to muster him in as a drummer-boy, and with a glad heart he accepted the proposition. Accordingly he became at last a soldier in reality as well as in name. His purpose was now accomplished. The sunbeams of cheerfulness again shone in his heart, and he soon began to display all those qualities of hardihood and recklessness so natural to the soldier.

CHAPTER IV.

MULDROUGH'S HILL is one of the jagged and broken spurs of the Cumberland Mountains, and traverses the Louisville and Nashville railroad due east and west, about thirty-five miles south of the former city. It was near here, while, on the 17th of September, 1861, the rebel General Buckner, with a force of 20,000 men, threatened the seizure of that city, and with it the State of Kentucky, that the chivalrous Rousseau, with his little band of 2,000 men, waded the turbid waters of the Rolling Fork, and placing them upon Muldrough's heights, defied the rebel horde. It constitutes a natural defence to all the country north of it. It was to aid in

strengthening this naturally strong position that the Ninth Michigan was ordered here, and they at once commenced the construction of earth-works.

While here Robert was armed and equipped with a Colt's revolver and a drum, and so good a master did he have, and so ambitious was he to excel, that he speedily became an excellent drummer. And while here, too, he commenced practising with the pistol, in case he should have occasion to shoot a rebel. He had possessed his pistol for some time, but had never been permitted to fire it. One afternoon, being sent to a neighboring town on an errand, he carried his pistol with him, and said to himself, "Now I will shoot it all I please, and the guards can't stop me either." When well on the way he discharged one barrel, then reloaded it,

and soon after, seeing a good fat hog, he was tempted to shoot it. When one ponders upon the commission of a wrong act, if he harbor the evil intent in his heart for a moment, human nature is so weak that she generally surrenders her fortress of honor and truth, and what was a mere thought becomes an accomplished fact, and then, when too late, the wrong-doer repents his folly. And so it was in this case. For after Robert had shot the hog five successive times before killing it, he became frightened at what he had done, and ran to town with all his might. On the way he met a man and a boy, who inquired of him whether he had seen a hog, saying they had lost one. His guilty conscience accused him, but he stifled it and boldly answered, "I have seen no hog at all on the road." He returned to camp by

the same road, and upon passing the spot where the hog lay, there were two citizens, the boy and a soldier looking at it. He was again asked if he knew anything about the matter, and he again stoutly denied any knowledge of it. The idea was very prevalent among our soldiery that all was fair in war, and that being in a Southern State they were of course in the country of the public enemy, and therefore that pillage, plunder, theft and the destruction of property in general, were the essential concomitants of that condition. To guard against the commission of these grave offenses, wherein the soldier constituted himself the judge with plenary powers of execution, orders were issued by military commanders prohibiting these acts of lawless violence, and declaring that the severest punishment would be inflicted upon those guilty

of perpetrating them. Once safe in his own camp, the adventurer was so elated that he could not keep the secret to himself, but told some of the members of his company, and that night he, with others, stole through the guard line, found the hog, cut it up, and packed it back to camp. The boys thought they would like fresh pork for a change. Robert got one leg for his share, and gave part of it to his Captain. He naturally asked him where he got it, and remarked that the man who killed it was not a very good butcher. Robert simply replied that he had bought it down town. The next day a man came into camp and complained to Colonel Duffield that his men had killed one of his hogs, and taken and cooked it. The Colonel replied, that he had heard nothing of the affair, but would investigate it. He then asked the

man if he knew who had done it. He said he thought it was a small boy. The Colonel remarked that he would try to find out who were implicated, and make them pay for it. He directed the "officers' call" to be beaten, and on presenting themselves, they were asked if they knew anything about the matter. The Captain of Company B said:

"My Drummer-boy brought me a piece of pork for my breakfast this morning, but I do not know where he got it; he said he bought it."

Robert was then called up to the Colonel's tent, and the following colloquy ensued:

Colonel. Robert, do you know anything about this man's hog?

Robert. No, sir.

Colonel. Where did you get the pork you

gave your Captain ?

Robert. I bought it.

Colonel. Who from ?

Robert. From a man down in town. Here his face turned very red, and he could scarcely speak.

Colonel. Have you a pistol ?

Robert. I have, sir.

Colonel. Let me see it. After examining it, he said, "When did you fire it last ?"

Robert. Yesterday.

Colonel. How many times ?

Robert. Five.

Colonel. This man says, when you came to camp you passed him on the road, and you had no load — nothing in your hands ; besides, there were five pistol shots in the hog.

Robert's guilt now flew in his face, coloring

it deeper than before ; he saw that he was cornered, and resolved to tell the truth, so far as he was concerned ; but in no manner to betray his companions in the adventure. He therefore told the truth, only assuming that he had brought the hog to camp himself ; and thus the affair was settled ; he, for his punishment, being sent to the guard-house for one week.

The Colonel soon after found out that other members of Robert's company had helped him to cut up and bring the pork into camp : and although he condemned the act in all its details, nevertheless being a man of generous impulses, he could not but approve and applaud the firmness and integrity of the boy's friendship in assuming that he alone had committed all the wrong, thereby screening from punishment those who were also implicated, but who would not have

been had he not divulged the fact of the killing. Some very moral and religious people may question whether there be any principle of honor presented in this transaction. I have no dispute to make upon that point, and will simply remark that there are those who think one part of it highly commendable, and that the world would be better off were such conduct more frequently practised.

The next day the Colonel released the drummer-boy from imprisonment, restricting his liberty for the week to the camp lines, and advising him to do wrong no more.

A few days after this occurrence, the regiment was ordered to the foot of Muldrough's Hill, and encamped there for several days. One of the most noticeable features in the life of a new soldier is his exceeding wariness and watchful-

ness, especially if he is in the field and liable to be confronted by an enemy. Until he has become a veteran, inured to the hardships, exposures and dangers of the soldier, he never ventures forth without a musket, bayonet and pistol, fearful of meeting a foe.

Kentucky during the war was more or less hostile ground. A large majority of the people were true to the Union cause, but there existed within its borders a powerful minority, whose every sympathy was with the rebellion, and who constantly encouraged rebel invasions and raids. And therefore, while our armies were far advanced southward, and the rebel hosts far down in Middle Tennessee, or Alabama and Georgia, still there was no security for persons or property, for the cavalry of the rebels Morgan and Forrest, and scores of guerilla bands under desper-

ado lead, dashed through the country, hither and thither, with the seeming rapidity of a comet, carrying consternation, ruin and death all along their course.

The new regiments which generally performed guard duty along our railroad communications, and at exposed points, were necessarily on the alert to prevent surprise and the destruction of the charge in their keeping. Outpost duty was therefore strictly executed, and so susceptible of fear is the imagination in time of real or supposed danger, that many false alarms result and many ludicrous scenes occur. Not unfrequently some poor animal paid the penalty of its life for presuming to venture too near the over-zealous pickets in search of a stray bit of herbage. Such an event happened at this time with the Ninth Michigan. One very dark night, about

the hour of twelve, one of the guards heard something approaching him, and with gruff voice shouted "Halt!" then repeated the well-known formula "*Who comes there?*" A second and third time this query was propounded, but no answer came. Hearing the noise continue, apparently a stealthy creeping through the bushes near him, fear, too, partly seizing him, so that now one foot-tread magnified into the tramp of a thousand, he fired his gun and at once raised an alarm. The entire camp was awakened, great excitement prevailed, men were ordered out, their guns loaded, the picket line reinforced, and the regiment held for action; and so the long hours of that eventful night passed away in earnest watching and fearful suspense. But no enemy appeared, no attack was made, in fact, no further noise was heard; this awful stillness made

the suspense more terrible. Daylight came at last, and the object of the alarm was discovered. A few rods in front of the trusty guard was found an unfortunate pig, which, having got entangled in some briars, had naturally tried to get out, but not without making some noise. This had attracted the sensitive ear of the guard, resulting in the instantaneous death of the pig, without even a parting squeal to inform his enemy of the nature of his victim.

And how did our hero behave; he who had been so persistent in his efforts to become a soldier and shoot the traitors to his country? The record exhibits no special bravery; but on the other hand he very much resembled the courage of Jos. Sedley—a character so inimitably described by Thackeray in his “Vanity Fair.” In the confusion incident to the alarm, our brave

warrior boy frantically rushed through the camp, having first beaten the long roll, and seeing Lieutenant Purdy—one of those officers who had taken such an active part in sending him home on a former occasion—he despairingly asked him “What shall I do?” meanwhile hanging on his coat-tail and following him around as if he were his only friend on earth. The Lieutenant, ashamed of the ridiculous sight, peremptorily ordered him away, telling him that if he hung on him he would get shot. This remark had its weight, Robert evidently seeing the thing in a new light, and remembering there was a barn a little distance in rear of the camp, he ran and hid away in that till morning. Perchance at this time he thought with Hudibras—

" Ah me ! what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron !
For tho' Dame Fortune seemed to smile,
And leer upon him for a while,
She'll after show him, in the nick
Of all his glories, a dog-trick."

He afterwards very sagely remarked in speaking of this affair, "I did not get killed that night, sure." But we must remember that this was the boy's first experience in an alarm of battle; and we cannot wonder that a lad of twelve years should get frightened, particularly when we recall the fact that hundreds and thousands of full-grown men have run on similar occasions.

A week after this affair the regiment was ordered to Nashville, Tennessee, going by rail to Louisville, thence by steamer to Smithland, a small town at the mouth of the Cumberland river, thence across the country to their destina-

tion on foot. Arriving here, Robert met with another adventure. Anxious to see the city, he received permission from his Colonel to do so. Having satisfied his desire in this respect, he began to inquire the whereabouts of his regiment, but all his inquiries were unavailing. A very rigid system of Provosts was maintained at that time in the city, and as night approached they made their usual rounds, halting every soldier they met, and woe to him if he had not the requisite pass properly signed by his commanding officer and approved at Post Head Quarters.

Robert, little knowing the existence of this strict rule, soon fell in with a squad of these patrols, and having no pass at all, save the verbal one received from his commander, and which the soldiers failed to see, was marched, in spite of all his protestations, to the guard-house, where

he had the privilege of lying on the naked floor for the night. The next morning he was returned to his regiment, and again made a short residence in the guard-house for being gone all night.



CHAPTER V.

THE regiment now proceeded to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, a place now famous in history and in song for the many hard-fought battles in and around it. It is a beautiful town of about four thousand inhabitants, situated on high rolling ground, bordering the north fork of Stone river, and thirty miles south of Nashville, on the Nashville and Chattanooga railway. It has many handsome houses, several churches, and a court-house very pretty in its architectural design, and which stands in the centre of a large public square, all around which are the business places of the town. The surrounding country stretches away in a plain-like surface, especially

on the south and west, presenting a great variety of landscape. Here and there appear great tracts, cultivated with cotton or with grain, while ever and anon are seen the spacious mansions of the planters, environed with thrifty hedges and groves teeming with the tropical verdure.

The Ninth Michigan, together with some other commands, including a battery, occupied the town for some months, guarding a considerable amount of stores which were placed there, making it an intermediate base in the operations of Buell's army. Company B—Robert's company—was constituted the provost guard for the town, its quarters being in the Court-house.

In the early summer, sickness prevailed to considerable extent, and among the victims to typhoid was Robert the Drummer-boy. With him, as with thousands of others thus prostrated in a

strange land upon a bed of suffering and pain, memory recalled a home which then seemed more precious than ever. It rose before him—humble and homely—but a home nevertheless, blessed with a mother's love, a love which he felt, in its yearning sympathy, reached him, though never so far away, assuaging every sorrow, dispelling every grief, cheering his heart with new-found delight, purifying his soul with sacred influences, which lifted him above the meander ambitions of life, and made him feel that his own home, so abounding with a mother's love, was the Heaven of his hopes and joys—a Heaven, perchance, lost forever.

But he was not deserted in his hour of trouble. His comrades attended him and he had attentive medical care; and among the good company who visited him at this time was a kind-

hearted old lady who lived near by, named Reaves. She was assiduous in her attentions, and as he grew better, she brought him vegetables to eat and buttermilk to drink. He felt very thankful to her, and soon as he was able to go about, visited much at her house. Now it happened that the good Mrs. Reaves had two daughters, youthful and florid beauties, and it will be no great stretch of the imagination if it should occur to the reader that sensations, sweet and delicious, perturbed the hearts of all three, and that compassion soon grew into esteem, and at length ripened into a warmer regard. This state of things might have been hastened from the fact that our hero was again taken sick with the measles, and at the request of his benefactress permitted to remain with Mrs. Reaves, where he was ministered to not only

by the lady herself but by the two blooming damsels. But he was probably very far from a sanguine assurance that his inclinations would ever attain that acme of wedded bliss which such a passion, properly encouraged, under favorable circumstances generally attains. He was too young for such an exploit; however, Cupid is not at all particular in whose hearts he lodges his arrows of love, and alliances occur in which the ages of the parties seem to be considered the least important requisite.

At any rate, nothing ever came of this pleasantry. Perhaps it was because a cruel and inexorable fate, in the shape of a swift-coming military disaster, prevented it. Ah, fate! how omnipotent thy power! Indeed—

“We are the victims of its iron rule,
The warm and beating human heart its tool;
And man, a mortal, godlike, but its fool.”

Among other incidents that occurred in the career of our hero while at this place is this one: One day while at the depot waiting the Southern train, he met a comrade, and the two resolved to go to Nashville, although without leave or license. When near La Vergne the train ran off the track, piling up into an inextricable wreck. The result was the two runaways had to walk back a distance of fifteen miles. Of course he had been missed, and upon giving an account of himself he was consigned to the guard-house for three days to expiate the offense. This guard-house was a two-story concern, in which all sorts of offenders were placed. At this time there were seventeen poor slaves in confinement up stairs, awaiting reclamation by their masters, it being the policy of our government then to make the army, to a certain

extent, the custodian of that species of property. These poor slaves, having an aspiration for freedom in their hearts, had fled from their masters and come within the Federal lines at Murfreesboro, expecting to find that sacred boon beneath the stars and stripes. How great their disappointment, when under the command of a Federal officer they were locked up for a speedy return to bondage! That night as the drummer-boy lay on the floor in a room below them, and heard their moans and the tales of their sorrow, his heart felt for them, and he resolved if possible to set them free. So, making an excuse to the solitary guard that the graybacks in his room were too numerous for his comfort, he asked permission to sleep up stairs in the hall. This was granted, and in the course of the night he managed to force the door, and

silently, one by one, the slaves stole across the guard's beat and escaped. This task accomplished, he returned to his old sleeping place, and in the morning when it was found the slaves had flown he knew nothing about it. Here was evinced more sympathy for the unfortunate blacks than had often been manifested as yet by our army; and the act of freeing them was certainly a most daring achievement in one so young. Evidently he had not the fear of a violation of the Fugitive Slave Law, the compromises of the Constitution, or the military orders in respect to the institution of slavery, the least in his mind. He could see no justice in confining any human being simply because he desired his freedom; and, acting upon this impulse, the foundation of Natural and Divine, if not of Human Law, he performed

the deed. And who, to-day, will condemn it?

On the 29th of June, 1862, an expedition was made to Chattanooga, Tennessee, under the command of Gen. James S. Negley. A portion of his forces moved easterly from Rogersville, Alabama, while the remainder advanced from Murfreesboro, the two forces concentrating at Sweden's Cove, in the Cumberland Mountains. The Ninth Michigan constituted a part of the Murfreesboro force, and as a matter of course the Drummer-boy accompanied it. Chattanooga was a distance of fully one hundred and thirty miles, and the march was rapidly made. A slight skirmish ensued at Sweden's Cove, but no great resistance was offered.

By the 4th of June the entire command was in front of Chattanooga. The troops were drawn up in line of battle on the north bank of the

Tennessee, and the artillery commenced playing upon the town, and to-day many houses are evidence of the cannonade. All along the south bank of the river were rifle-pits and redoubts, mounted with heavy guns, capable of maintaining a vigorous assault. The demonstration, however, was confined almost entirely to our side, and, after a few hours of indiscriminate firing, confined principally to the artillery, our forces withdrew, concluding that Chattanooga was too strongly fortified, and might be too well filled with rebels, silent and concealed, to justify any attempt to take possession of the place. And thus the expedition ended. The troops marched back to Murfreesboro and other posts, and settled down into the usual routine of camp life.

In this affair our Drummer-boy performed no feat of arms, but made a very successful forage

raid. The wagon-train having gotten well behind the troops, and the men having exhausted their haversacks, the drum corps received permission of the Major to scour the country for a short distance and supply themselves with something to eat. They soon came to a negro-hut, and asked the blacks where there was a rich rebel lived. They said their master was a rich rebel, and that he lived just down the road and over the hill. They soon found the house, and as it was then early in the war, when the poor ignorant Southern people had been taught that the Northern soldiers were monsters and wore horns on their heads like an ox or cow, the inmates became very much frightened, and the old man, the mothers and the daughters, all fell upon their knees, begging the drummer band not to touch them, saying, "Indeed we are Union peo-

ple." The boys replied that they would not harm a hair of their heads, but that they were hungry and wished something to eat. They then protested that they had nothing for themselves, that the guerillas had only the day before taken everything from them—flour, meal and all. As the negroes had said these people were rebels, they did not believe their story, although told ever so affectingly, so they proceeded to search the house to satisfy themselves of the truth of what had been said. The discoveries did not verify the statements made; for in the cupboard were found rolls of corn-cake, plates of biscuits, pies, jars of preserves, and many other niceties not likely to have been left by rebel raiders. They therefore helped themselves to the goodies most plenteously. They then descended into the cellar. Here our Drummer-boy found a barrel

of whisky—pure Robinson county—and soon every canteen was filled. Other soldiers now coming up, they were supplied, and having stowed away all that was possible, not only in their stomachs, I am sorry to say, but in their canteens, cups and other utensils, they knocked in the head of the barrel and spilled the remainder on the ground. They then proceeded to another house, where they found several pans of milk, which they drank, and then killed a pig, one of the number shouldering and carrying it. Coming to a shady hollow, through which meandered a rivulet, they kindled a fire and prepared their evening repast, cutting the pig into small pieces and roasting them on a stick. Here, too, the regiment had encamped for the night. Another time he stopped at a house and asked the lady if she had any chickens to sell.

She said, "Yes, if you will pay me in silver."

He replied, "I have no silver, but will pay you in greenbacks."

She retorted, curling her lip and looking very contemptuously at one which he held in his hand, "Humph! they are not worth the paper they are printed on."

He then concluded she was a rebel "dyed in the wool," and so helped himself to the chickens—a donation by the lady because of her prejudices against Uncle Samuel's money.

On the 11th of July, 1862, the news came to Murfreesboro that the famous raider, John Morgan, had dashed into Lebanon, Tenn., with his cavalry, and was carrying on with a high hand; that the force stationed there had been taken prisoners; that two citizens had been killed; and that the depot of commissary and

quarter-master's stores had been destroyed. A regiment of cavalry chanced to be in Murfreesboro at that time, and it was ordered to go to the relief of the town, distant some fifteen miles. Our Drummer, not yet distinguished by his display of heroic valor, but longing to wipe out the stigma which he felt attached to him at Muldrough's Hill, hearing that the cavalry regiment was going to Lebanon to fight John Morgan, and being acquainted with some of the men, gained the consent of his Captain to accompany them. Mounting one of their horses, armed with his own pistol and a sabre, he was ready for the fray. Away dashed the squadrons, and in an hour and a half Lebanon was reached. The company with which the Drummer served was deployed into a skirmish line, and soon met the rebels. A volley of balls came whirring

through the air as they entered into the streets of the town, one of them wounding the Lieutenant, by whose side Robert rode, in the leg. This frightened our hero a little, and he galloped around a corner close at hand to get out of danger, and ran into a whole parcel of rebels, several of whom fired at him. Now, seeing rebels all round him, he seemed to get suddenly courageous, and, straightening up in his saddle, discharged the six loads of his revolver at the "Johnnies," who stood and looked on in amazement at the temerity of so small a boy. Then he wheeled his horse around the corner again, dashed on to his company, which was now skirmishing in another direction, and remained with it until Morgan's men cleared the town, and, amid a great cloud of dust, hurried away toward McMinnville. This exploit won the little

Drummer a *name*. The daring deed gained circulation through the public press, and ere he knew it the name of "Robert Hendershot, the Drummer-boy" was familiar to thousands all over the land. He returned to Murfreesboro that night, little dreaming that on the morrow he would add another laurel to his wreath of fame.



CHAPTER VI.

SUNDAY, the 13th of July, 1862, witnessed a valiant but unequal contest between the rebel and federal soldiery in and around Murfreesboro. The troops assigned to the defense of this place consisted of six companies of the Ninth Michigan volunteers, Lieut. Col. Parkhurst; a squadron of the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry; the Third Minnesota Volunteers, Col. Lester; and Hewitt's First Kentucky Battery—a total force of about eight hundred men, all under the command of Col. Lester, as post commandant. Exercising a questionable generalship, Col. Lester had separated this small force into two detachments, scattering it at a distance of from a half to

three quarters of a mile east of the town, and fully a mile apart, and was ill prepared to receive the blow. Gen. T. L. Crittenden, just assigned to the command of the post by order of Gen. Buell, and Colonel Duffield, who had been absent on leave, arrived on the evening of the 12th, and having inspected the location of these troops, discussed the impropriety of a divided command, and decided upon concentration, but concluded to defer it until the morrow. A fatal delay! it was then too late.

The sun had not yet risen, and the men were still slumbering, when the clatter of horses' hoofs, and the sharp, quick rattle of numberless guns, told too fearfully that the enemy was upon them—that they were indeed surprised. They rushed from their tents and made the best resistance possible, but, all unformed, their ran-

dom shots were without effect. Crittenden was captured in his bed; Duffield, springing into the centre of the combat, received two wounds which disabled him for further duty; and Parkhurst, after several attempts, formed a hollow square to resist the heavy cavalry charge, which was again sweeping heavily down upon him. In this compact form they repulsed the rebel onslaughts for full twenty minutes, hurling volleys of bullets into their advancing line, compelling them to retire. But they returned with increased force, and the Ninth Michigan was dislodged from its position, scattered, and thenceforward fought in squads and on their own hook. Capt. DeLand alone, maintaining his company formation, deploying them into a skirmish line, and fighting behind trees, stumps and bushes, did effectual service. The Third Minnesota, in its

isolated condition, fared no better, and by eleven o'clock in the forenoon the whole command was forced to surrender. Company B, Lieut. Rice commanding, Captain Rounds being absent, occupying the Court-house, did their duty bravely. When the Texas Rangers and the Georgia Cavalry awoke the still morning with their terrific yells, as they rushed into the public square, Robert Hendershot, the Drummer-boy, unable to sleep, had already risen, and chanced to be looking out of a window. Seeing a long line of horsemen on the gallop, and hearing their yells, he knew it must be the enemy. All excited, he rushed for his drum, and beat upon it the long roll with such tremendous energy that in an instant every occupant of the Court-house was as wide awake and as excited as himself. As soon as the rebels entered the

square they poured a volley of bullets which tore through the windows (to use the language of the Drummer-boy), "like sand through a sieve." The action now commenced in earnest, with the advantage decidedly in favor of the occupants of the Court-house, for it served them as a barricade, and, with unerring aim, they laid low many a misguided Southron who that day entered the fray. Finally, the rebels got possession of the lower story of the building, and after a bloody hand-to-hand conflict on the stairway, failing to subdue the heroic band, set the house on fire, determined that it should either surrender or burn up. As human nature can more easily endure captivity than burning, and finding no escape from the one or the other, the men surrendered.

None in this heroic band acted a more dis-

tinguished part than the Drummer-boy. After beating the long roll he seized a musket and cartridge-box which lay upon the floor, and protecting himself behind the wall near a window, deliberately picked out and shot at man after man. Among others was a rebel Colonel, who stood on the side-walk in front of a house within easy hailing distance. The Drummer haled to him and said, "Go into the house there, you rebel, or I'll shoot you," to which command the Colonel roughly replied, with a profane imprecation, "I'll go into the house when I get ready." The Drummer made the same demand again and received the same reply. The gun was then discharged, and the rebel Colonel, reeling for a moment, sank to the ground a corpse. Some citizens, who knew the Drummer-boy, saw him commit this deed, and

it did not help to assure him any better treatment, now that he was captured. The rebels gathered around the men as they marched out of the Court-house, and robbed them of everything valuable they had. One rifled the Drummer's pocket of the little money he possessed.

The Federal sick and wounded having been paroled, the balance of the command was marched to McMinnville, a distance of fifty-eight miles south and east of Murfreesboro. This long and tedious journey they were compelled to make in fifteen hours, and a portion of it under a hot July sun. Our hero having for several days had a severe attack of camp diarrhœa, was in no condition to make this forced march. Soon after starting, the rebel Gen. Forrest passing him, he asked if he could ride. The General replied in a very severe tone, "No." This made

him mad. He fell out of the ranks and declared he was sick, that he might shoot him, but he would not walk another rod. Forrest then told one of his men to take him back to the wagon train and let him ride. The man did so, and gave him a six-mule team to drive. The wagon was full of rebels who had fallen sick during the campaign. But a great mistake was made in trusting this charge to the Drummer-boy; for as the train moved at a very rapid rate he took special delight in running over all the rough places in the road, and after a time, coming to a deep creek over which was a bridge without a railing, he purposely ran the wagon off, capsizing the sick rebels into the stream, compelling them to swim out, and greatly endangering the lives of some few who could not swim. He then pretended the

mules had become unruly and that he could not help the accident, and furthermore that he had injured one of his limbs so he could not walk, and altogether seemed to feel very badly over the occurrence. The sick rebels having all been rescued, were put into another wagon—the former one having been well broken to pieces—but they would not consent that the Drummer-boy should drive any longer, and so he was put upon a very quaint-looking, antediluvian steed which must have borne a very striking family resemblance to Orpheus C. Kerr's famous Pegasus. While he was thus journeying on, the rebels talked with him and frightened him by saying they should send him to a Southern prison and keep him during the war, because he ran the wagon off the bridge, and killed one of their colonels in the street at

Murfreesboro. He stoutly persisted that the former was an accident, and that he did not do the latter at all. They however declared they saw him do it, and told him if he would tell them all about it, own it, be frank and honest, they would let him go. So, taking the rebels at their word, he minutely related the whole affair. His story concluded, they gave him his liberty by placing him inside an armed guard who kept close watch over him until they camped for supper just at night. A part of the wagons were unloaded, and among the rubbish that strewed the ground—captured property—he saw his old drum, the one with which he had sounded the long roll that very morning. He asked one of the guards if he might lie down by the pile they had unloaded and sleep a little while. The request was

granted, and with joy in his heart he lay close beside his dear lost treasure and soon fell asleep. Upon awaking he found it was raining, and that all his comrades had been moved over into an adjoining field. He saw also that he was alone, while a solitary guard, whose beat was full five rods long, kept watch and ward over him and the property. Soon the rain descended in torrents, and the night clouded into Cimmerian gloom.

The mind of our hero was greatly disturbed by the threats made against him during the day, the putting a guard around him, and the fact that now he was kept separated from his companions in arms. Strange alarms seized him, and he fancied himself rotting in a Southern prison, hanging on a gibbet, or standing against a tree, the target for a shot. Not relishing any

such possible fates as these, he determined to escape. So when, by the splash, splash of the sentry's feet he knew he was at the further end of his beat, he noiselessly lifted his drum, then rolled it before him and cautiously crept, foot by foot, to a fence which, in the day-time, he had observed ran along in the rear of the wagons, and beyond which were many bushes and some trees. He soon reached the fence. He first attempted to crawl through it, but could not; he then climbed it, but it creaked and made a noise. He thought now he was surely ruined, and expected that instant to hear the gruff "halt" of the sentry, and perchance, feel the contents of his gun. He sat for a moment or two, motionless as a statue; but hearing no commotion, lowered his drum to the ground and descended himself. He then

crept in the same way upon his hands and knees through the mud and wet grass, over the rocks and through the bushes for more than half a mile. Then he walked on utterly ignorant whither. At last, in the darkness, he blundered into a spring, upsetting several pans of milk which the good people in the house close by had placed in and around it to keep cool. The terrible racket they made, at first startled him. Hearing no alarm he grew bolder, and groping about, found other pans, and drank sweet milk to the verge of his capacity. Possessed with that spirit of spite which seems to animate all soldiers, he emptied the rest and proceeded on his way. At length, feeling very tired and sore, he concealed himself in some bushes and slept until morning. He then found out by some negroes that he was near the

Murfreesboro road, and that he had come in the right direction during the night. So, having gained the road, and not caring to go alone, he lay down behind the fence and waited the return of his comrades when they should have been paroled. They came at last, and he rushed from his hiding place to join them. They all thought he was a rebel, and indeed he was a pitiable sight. His clothes were no longer blue, but reddish brown in color, owing to his great familiarity with the mud through which he had crawled and so frequently lain down. In due time they reached Murfreesboro, and at once inquiries were made by the citizens about the Drummer-boy. Several saw him and looked daggers at him, evincing clearly a determination to kill him should they ever have a chance. Robert felt that it was too warm a country

for him, and hastened on to Nashville in advance of the regiment, and there awaited its coming. It was ordered by Gen. Buell to "Camp Chase," Columbus, Ohio, to await exchange. On arriving at Cincinnati these paroled men were treated as if they were rebels. Another regiment guarded them through the city, keeping every man in the ranks; and little Robert having once left the ranks, one of the guards exclaimed, "Come back, or I'll shoot you!" and he, greatly enraged at this treatment, retorted, "Shoot a small boy like me if you want to." The guard did not shoot, but he pricked him with the point of his bayonet and made him return to the ranks. Now, the reason why these men were thus strictly guarded was, not because of any spite against them, but because being paroled prisoners of war they might attempt to go

to their homes without proper authority, and some of them might embrace the opportunity to desert.

A week of semi-prison life in "Camp Chase" made our young hero homesick, and he applied for a discharge from the service, which was readily granted, and he was speedily returned to his mother. It never cost him anything to travel, for he was always passed by the conductor or engineer. On this homeward trip he rode with the engineer, and had the misfortune, while on the way to Cleveland, of meeting with one of those accidents which so frequently occur in our country, in which engine, baggage and passengers are piled together in one common ruin, and by which scores of people, good and bad, are hurried out of the world without a moment of warning. In this affair some of the passengers

were killed, and many others wounded and bruised. The engineer escaped unhurt, the fireman with a broken leg, and our Drummer with a badly injured head and shoulders. While on the road from Cleveland to Jackson some ladies took a great fancy to him, talked with him a great deal, and said they had heard of the brave deeds of the little Drummer-boy of the Ninth Michigan, and even went so far as to show their appreciation of him by oft-repeated kisses. He, though daring as a youthful Chevalier Bayard in the field of Mars, was excessively modest in the presence of so many ladies, and the attentions he received nearly overwhelmed him. Although by no means displeased with these little kindnesses, he was, nevertheless, truly grateful when they had surfeited their admiration and left him alone in his glory.

CHAPTER VII.

ROBERT's mother received him most affectionately, and imprinted kiss after kiss upon his lips, for with all his faults—faults which the war had generated—she dearly loved him. Besides, he was to her as one newly risen from the dead, for she had heard once that he had been killed, and again that he had died from fever, and a third time that he had been taken a prisoner and died in the hands of the rebels. And the poor woman actually showed her son letters from different parties setting forth these facts, one further stating that he had been captured by the rebels and shot for killing one of their colonels at Murfreesboro.

It was midsummer when he returned—in the last days of July—long days, blazing sunshine, fervid heat. A feeling of intense laziness stole over him, and he dreaded moving or doing. It had been hot weather enough in Tennessee, but it seemed hotter just then in Michigan. A perfect *ennui* possessed him, and he knew not what to do with himself. His mother had exacted a promise from him that he would go into the army no more, and she told him if he did she would follow him. What should he do? His life for the past year, nearly, had been full of adventure. He had seen a great deal of country and many new people. He was now impatient to be going; his soul thirsted for new excitements; his mind longed to embrace more of the world, to experience still further conflicts with its masses, its rough cor-

ners, that thereby the boy might develop into the man, strong, experienced, symmetrical, with a full knowledge of the right and the wrong—firm in purpose to do the one and shun the other.

It were wrong to retard such a development; and it was very clear that such a will as his could brook no restraint if it once wished to be free.

In a day or two he visited the Union school to see his little playmates, and the teacher introduced him to all the scholars as the "Drummer-boy of the Ninth Michigan." At recess he shook hands with all the children and then bade them good-bye, saying he was going to the war again. Whence came this resolution? What hidden spring had been so suddenly touched? What unseen hand had now swept

across his fancy, impelling his ambitious nature so soon to leave mother, and friends, and again go among strangers?

He returned home from the school and entered into a long and pleasant conversation with his mother, telling her the many things that had happened to him since he went away, filling her bosom with a joyous pride, when suddenly the shrill whistle of the western train greeted his ear, and he abruptly ended the conversation by saying, "Mother, I'll just run over to the depot and see the cars come in!" The train arrived, and he again left home for Detroit without bidding his mother farewell. Again was her heart wrung with grief when she learned that her son had thus left her. He wandered around the city, until finally coming to the foot of Jefferson Avenue, he noticed a recruiting office

in the charge of a Captain Hogan, and after a little conversation with him, enlisted as a Drummer-boy in the Eighth Michigan Infantry. This regiment was already in the service, and was attached to the Army of the Potomac. And thus had he broken the pledge made his mother, that he would not go into the army any more. Not willfully and maliciously did he grieve his mother: it was an innate something, a panting for army life, its excitements and glories, that impelled him to it. And afterwards, when taken to task about it, he laughingly replied, "that promises to stay at home were not good in time of war." Within a week after his enlistment he heard that his mother was coming for him, and determined not to be captured, he adopted the course of many of our weak-kneed countrymen, who were fearful of the draft, and

fled to Canada, where he remained a full week. On his return to Detroit, he was arrested by the guard as a deserter, and placed in confinement. Captain Hogan, hearing of his arrest, called to see him, listened to his story, and then took him to Colonel Smith, the Post Commandant, who, upon learning the reason for his running away, released him. He was then furnished with a drum, and he, with another boy and a fifer, played daily at the office, "drumming up recruits." Captain Hogan treated our hero very kindly, giving him many little comforts and licenses, and he in turn formed a strong attachment for that officer.

About the 1st of September, Captain Hogan was ordered to the Potomac with some men. Robert desired to accompany him, but was persuaded to remain as drummer at the office

until his return, which he said would be in from two to three weeks.

Meantime another officer, a Second Lieutenant, was put in charge of the station. Robert did not like him, and the dislike soon became mutual. This man was the very opposite of Captain Hogan, and was a worthless fellow, who, "clothed in a little brief authority," grossly abused his men, and spent the greater portion of his time in carousing and drinking. Every one who had the misfortune to be under him hated him, and Robert plainly told him once, that "he was not fit to command a Corporal's guard of dogs." He scolded the little drummer corps because they did not play every minute in the day, and threatened to put them in the guard-house if they did not salute him every time he passed them. Robert, smarting under

this servitude, was determined to "pay him off," as he expressed it, at the first opportunity. So, one day noticing that officer in a crowd of people, and seeing that he was sober (which was a rare thing), he stepped into the circle, and upon being ordered away very insolently by the man of such exalted rank and consequence, full of madness and venom, he retorted:

"You think you are a *great man*, but you are only a *Second Lieutenant*. You have abused and insulted me just as long as you can; and if you don't stop it I will run away."

This enraged the man terribly, and seizing the boy who had thus so publicly denounced and defied him, he dragged him into his office and demanded him to take back what he had said. Robert, full of pluck, and feeling that he had simply spoken the truth, replied, "No, sir,

never, *never*, so long as I live." He then threatened to put him in the guard-house, and went out for that purpose, but soon returned, saying he had changed his mind, and that if he did not take back his saucy, impudent words, he would give him a good whipping. Robert laughed to scorn this threat, and said, "You may whip me to death, if you dare to, Mr. Lieutenant, but I'll never take it back; besides, you dare not whip me, and you *can't* do it either." Then the man slapped him very hard in the face and made him cry with pain. Some person coming in at this juncture, the affair ended. The poor boy went out and told the soldiers what had happened, and they all heartily cursed the brute, and advised him to run away.

That night he stole down to the wharf and found a steamboat which was to leave for Sagi-

naw in an hour. He got permission to go, and soon after hired out to the saloon-keeper as bartender. Arrived in Saginaw, he saw one of his older brothers and told him what he was doing. He promptly wrote his mother and she replied, directing him to be sent home. The letter came too late, however, for the truant was back again in Detroit, where he had fallen into other hands. By some means it had been ascertained that Robert was on this boat, and the instant it touched the landing he was again arrested for a deserter and put in prison. Colonel Smith was a second time his friend, and upon learning that he had run away because of the recruiting officer's abuse, he was set free and returned to his former duty as Drummer. Nor was this all. The Lieutenant was placed under arrest for abusing his men, tried, and dismissed the service.

And thus what was his loss became the country's gain.

In another week Captain Hogan returned, and all passed pleasantly. About the 1st of October Chaplain Taylor, of the Eighth Michigan, came to take charge of a number of men, recruited for that and other regiments in the Potomac army, and Robert wished to go with him. He asked Captain Hogan's consent. He replied: "No, I wish you to stay here to drum."

Robert did not relish this, and said: "I don't want to stay here any more. I am tired of it. I enlisted for the Eighth Michigan, and I want to go where it is: and I *will* go, too."

The Captain merely responded, "I will see about that," and went to get a guard to put over him for safe keeping.

The boy, divining his purpose, ran to Colonel

Smith and asked him if he could not go to the front with Chaplain Taylor, and he assented. Overjoyed at his success, he hastened to the camp and told the soldiers that he was going with them. But his enthusiasm was dampened when Captain Hogan appeared with a guard and said, mildly, but firmly, "Come, my boy, I will see if you *will* go when I say *no*." Robert persisted that Colonel Smith said he could go. The Captain hardly believed it, and ordered the guard to take him. After quite a struggle they secured and carried him (as he would not walk) to the guard-house. The next morning he was released and directed to rendezvous in the camp with the other men.

Another week elapsed, and then came the order to go. Robert was pleased, for he longed again to see the army, and just before leaving

the city he wrote his mother that he had enlisted and in an hour would be on his way. Fortunately, Robert was acquainted with the chaplain, and was glad to be placed in his charge. He was an excellent man, and very attentive to the wants of his men. His little protege says of him, "He is as good a man as I ever came across."

Soon the cars whirled away, and his home, his friends, his own noble State, were all left far behind him, and perhaps forever.



CHAPTER VIII.

In due season Washington city, with its magnificent marble capitol, glowing with the purity of alabaster in the morning sunlight, came to view. Robert thought that nothing in the wide world could equal in grandeur this beautiful structure. As he stood upon the platform of the car, his soul drinking in the gorgeousness of the scene, he fell to the ground badly injured and narrowly escaping death. He had fallen in a fit, from which he did not recover under an hour. Then he seemed all right. Mr. Taylor, the kind chaplain, attended him closely, and when he was recovered asked him if he did not wish to return to Detroit. With a brave

heart he said, "No, sir, I have started for the regiment and I wish to join it."

The men were placed in comfortable barracks, and awaited an order for transportation. Some three weeks thus passed away, they getting very impatient at the delay; but the War Department and its sub-officials were in no hurry then more than now, and it is questionable if any event, however important or startling, short of the presence of an armed enemy, *could* disturb the red-taped punctilio of that august power.

Our hero, however, was delighted. He saw much to please him, and spent days in rambling through the Capitol, around the docks of the navy yard, and through the extensive grounds around the President's house, embellished with fountains, lawns, terraces, avenues, and well-gravelled serpentine walks. And he frequently

entered the White House, looked into the famous East Room, and watched with a feeling of awe the hosts of people who daily ascended the staircase to seek interviews with that great and good man, Mr. Lincoln. Here, too, our hero made the acquaintance of "Little Tad," as he is familiarly called, and used to amuse him greatly by drumming for him. And even Mr. Lincoln noticed him several times and smiled upon him and remarked he was very small for a Drummer-boy.

At last it was decided that the men whom Mr. Taylor had brought to Washington, should remain, and go in company with a large mass of other recruits to be shipped in a few days. So, keeping Robert still in his charge, he departed for the regiment. It was a beautiful, yet clear, cold day, near the middle of Novem-

ber, when, stepping on a steamer already crowded with soldiers, at the foot of Seventh Street, Robert found himself gliding down the Potomac. His youthful heart was fired with enthusiasm. In the little geography which he had studied while at school, much was said about this river and the hallowed associations connected with it. Opposite Washington was Alexandria, henceforth memorable for the dastardly assassination of the youthful and chivalrous Colonel Ellsworth. Rapidly they passed the navy yard, and the anchorage ground of the British fleet, when the British troops disembarked and destroyed our former Capitol building, losing to history and the world most precious records. Farther down the river was the ancient manorial estate of Mount Vernon, where the "Father of our Country," the immortal Washington, lived, died, and

was buried. And they recollected, too, that it was here Lafayette, who had served our country so well, near half a century after Independence Day, descended into the tomb of his illustrious chieftain and for an hour remained alone, thinking of the glorious past and weeping over its sadening memories. Can a thought of Washington do otherwise than inspire us with a nobler, purer and holier love for America, her unity, prosperity and peace!

Upon reaching Acquia Creek, the point of disembarkation, the steamer grounded in trying to land. Small boats were used, and after a time its great load of living, human freight was safely put ashore. Many, alas! then trod Virginian soil for the last time, and never again would joyfully hasten homewards, away towards the sun-setting.

The Army of the Potomac lay up the Rappahannock, and opposite Fredericksburg. Thitherward the chaplain and his little *protege* started on foot. At length growing weary, and seeing a horse which had been abandoned, but which was now busily engaged in eking out a very doubtful subsistence, the chaplain proposed to catch him, and then each one take his turn in riding the noble brute. Robert at once ran to carry out the suggestion, and after quite a chase, being more fleet of foot than his companions, caught him. And thus they journeyed on, until coming to a very pleasant spot, they stopped to rest, and accidentally falling asleep, awakened to find their four-footed companion a deserter. So, footsore and lame, they moved slowly on, trusting to reach some camp where they could both rest and satisfy the wants of the inner

man. Meeting a dilapidated piece of mechanism, termed by the negroes "a white trash," they asked the distance to Fredericksburg. He replied that it was "a right smart piece," but how far he did not know. With this satisfactory information they pushed ahead and finally came to a camp, and it was hailed with as much delight as are the oases of the desert by the half-dying traveler who for days, has wandered over its treacherous sands. Here they were welcomed to a comrade's fare. They ate heartily of hard-tack and fried pork, slept sweetly and refreshingly on a blanket spread upon the ground, and in the solace they then received the past was all forgotten and the future all unthought of.

The camp of the Eighth Michigan Infantry was gained at last, and then followed a respite for a season. Robert was sent by the Colonel

to the Drum-major of the regiment, and was assigned by him as Drummer for Company B, commanded by Captain Lewis. Our hero soon became generally acquainted with everybody in his regiment, and in a few days knew every General in the Ninth Army Corps.

There was another little Drummer-boy, a year his senior, to whom he became greatly attached. They would go out into the woods, and for hours play together. They loved one another greatly, and gladdened each other in the communion of their thoughts, as the sunshine lends brightness to the clouds. But alas! like all of earth's loves and friendships, this one, too, was doomed to be blasted. A bullet from one of the enemy's sharpshooters accomplished its fatal mission, and all that was spiritual and noble of his "dear, good, God-fearing companion," as he

calls him, passed from earth to the realms of never-ending bliss. For a while a shadow rested on the heart of Robert; but the excitements of camp—constant skirmishing, arrival of new troops, terrible cannonades—finally swept it away; and a ray of hope stole down into the depths of his soul, all faint and quivering, but, nevertheless, a hope that he might not be killed, but live once more to see home and mother.

Soon after his arrival, he was taken sick and lay in the hospital a week, during which time he took the usual allotment of quinine and opium. And once after this he was sick. One day he went down to a spring to get some water for cooking purposes, when he was seized with a fit, and fell into the mud and water around it. The boys in his Company, after waiting for some time for the water, went to the spring, found

him still insensible, and took him to the hospital, where he lay for seven days before he thoroughly recovered from the prostration. For a time all was well. But a day was near at hand, between the rising and setting of whose sun would be witnessed a more desperate battle than had yet occurred in the Potomac Army.



CHAPTER IX.

ON the 5th of November, 1862, General A. E. Burnside superseded General McClellan in the command of the Army of the Potomac. The famous Peninsular campaign of the latter had proved a failure, and the Government and the people were clamorous for a change. McClellan, under positive orders from the President, had again moved his army towards the enemy, and had established his headquarters at Warrenton when relieved from command. Ten days after, Burnside broke camp, and, by a rapid march, pushed forward to Fredericksburg with the intention of capturing that place before Lee could join it with his main army, thereby cutting off

his retreat to Richmond, and forcing him, if possible, to a decisive battle on the field.

But the authorities at Washington were to send forward a series of pontoon trains so the army could cross the Rappahannock. These, however, were delayed, and consequently Burnside lay idly on the banks of the river until near the middle of December. Meantime Lee accomplished all that Burnside had aimed to prevent, and now, although the odds of battle were desperate, still the Federal General resolved to attack the enemy, and confound him by the boldness of a direct assault.

Fredericksburg is situated on the Rappahannock, and on quite level ground. The country back of the town rises in a succession of terraced heights, upon which the rebel army lay—a heavy force—in strongly intrenched lines, and

to assail which the Federal troops must be exposed to a murderous fire of cannon and musketry while climbing the long open slopes. For two days previous to the battle, all was bustle and excitement on the banks of the Rappahannock. Great masses of troops were moving to and fro, the pontoons were dragged to the river's edge, and the sullen booming of long rows of cannon presaged a conflict, terrible and grand. Thursday witnessed one of the most fearful bombardments that occurred during the war. A large number of rebel sharpshooters lined the Fredericksburg bank, and by their deadly fire had successfully resisted Burnside's efforts to lay his pontoons, over which the army must cross to attack Lee's position. To dislodge these was the first task. One hundred and seventy-nine cannon opened instantaneously on the

fated town, and continuously through all the day and the following night they vomited forth shot and shell, carrying consternation to thousands of hearts, killing and wounding numberless others. It was early morn when this bombardment began. The city was shrouded in a dense fog, being imperceptible save here and there where a church spire towered loftily through it. Soon the earth shook with heavy rumblings—the reverberations of the “deep-mouthed dogs of war”—and great clouds of smoke, sulphurous and choking, rolled heavenward, commingled with bursts of sheeted flame which ascended through the sea of mist, proclaiming too surely the destruction dealt below. Near noon the fog lifted and drifted away, disclosing the city half in flames. And Headley says, “When the blood-red sun went down in the hazy sky, it shed a

lurid light on field and river, and frowning heights, and miles of quiet tents." And another writer says, "As the air darkened, the red flashes of the guns gave a new effect to the scene—the roar of each report being preceded by a fierce dart of flame, while the explosion of each shell was announced by a gush of fire in the clouds. Towering between us and the western sky, which was still showing its faded scarlet lining, was the huge, sombre pillar of grimy smoke that marked the burning of Fredericksburg. Ascending to a vast height, it bore away northward, shaped like a plume bowed in the wind."

But all this cannonade failed to accomplish the desired end. The guns could not be sufficiently depressed to drive out the sharpshooters, and now they must be dislodged by some other

means. Robert, "our Drummer-boy," had manifested a great interest in this undertaking, and had hung around the pontoons all day, greatly excited, and longing to participate in the fray. Long before morning of that day the rebels had startled our camps by firing a shell which burst within a few feet of the Drummer's tent. Robert sprang from his bed and beat the "long roll," with a vim which brought the regiment to arms instantly. But finding that it was only a rebel gun over the river, the men went to quarters and slept undisturbed until six o'clock the next morning. Then they were ordered down to a position near the pontoons, where they were to perform guard duty for the day. This was too tame business for our young hero, so strapping on his drum and pistols, he hastened down to the contested point of passage, where

the Seventh Michigan and the Nineteenth and Twentieth Massachusetts regiments lay, arms stacked, awaiting orders from the commanding General.

Burnside having resorted to every device possible to disperse the rebel annoyance secretly posted in the houses, and behind rifle-pits, and heaps of rubbish, at last called for volunteers to man the pontoons and effect a lodgement by rowing across the river. His great heart bled at the thought of the sacrifice thus to be made, but fate was imperative that something must be done. The Seventh Michigan, with a shout, clear and resonant with a courage which foretold success, responded to the General's appeal. In ten boats, each holding twenty-five to thirty-two men, they pulled straight on through the volleys of leaden hail which the rebels poured upon

them, and reached the opposite shore. The two Massachusetts regiments, inspired with equal heroism, followed, and the three together in a grand charge routed the rebels from their hiding places, killing and wounding many, and putting the rest to flight. Three bridges were now quickly laid, and soon shook under the tread of the Union host.

And where was our Drummer-boy during all this fiery ordeal? When the call was made for volunteers, and the Seventh so gallantly responded, he was the first to shout, "I will," and the foremost one in the boats. The Captain in charge of the Company in this boat, seeing the boy with his drum slung to his back, ordered him out, telling him he was too small for such business, and that he would surely be killed. The reply of the brave lad was noble—Spartan

in expression, and a truthful echo of the heart-throbs of the chivalrous crew that surrounded him. Standing up in the further end of the boat, swelling to his fullest height, he exclaimed, "I do not care if I am killed; I am willing to die for my country." The soldiers with him could not bear the idea of one so young as he falling a needless victim in this dangerous enterprise, and the Captain's orders were imperative, so deeply chagrined he hastened ashore. But a new idea flashed through his mind. With his face brightening up, he asked the Captain if he might help push the boat off. And he, not thinking of the ruse the boy was playing, said, "Yes, if it will please you." So when all was ready he pushed the boat off and let it drag him into the river, he clinging with his hands to the edge, and in this way he crossed ~~the~~

river. More than half the men in this boat were killed before touching shore, and so it was with those who came after. As Robert climbed up the river's bank, his drum was struck by a piece of broken shell and torn to pieces. This enraged him, and he seized a musket belonging to one of his comrades who had been shot close beside him, and went into a house near by, where he encountered a tall, gaunt looking rebel just loading his gun. Robert brought his gun to a ready, and ordered him to surrender. The gray-coat threw down his gun and cried out: "Don't shoot: I surrender." He then marched him back to the river, and found the first pontoon just completed. The Seventh Michigan seeing the boy and his prize, grew wild with excitement, and gave three rousing cheers for the "Drummer-boy of the Rappahan-

nock." Just then and there was this title acquired. It was a proud one for the little hero, and it was deservedly his. Several asked him if he wished help to guard his prisoner. He replied, "No; I am enough for him." All the way across the bridge and up the bank to the guard of the Seventh Michigan, where he left the captured rebel, he was cheered vociferously by the passing troops. And General Burnside, flushed with pride at the daring and gallant action of the boy, exclaimed, "Boy, I glory in your spunk; if you keep on in this way a few more years, you will be in my place." Having delivered his charge, he returned again to the Seventh Michigan. Every where he seemed suddenly known to all; and never was actor greeted with more hearty plaudits from never so excited an auditorium.

The three regiments were now prepared to charge through the city, and our hero, burning with the fire of a freshly kindled ambition, took his place in the ranks, ready for more glory or death in the doing. And when the cry resounded along the line, *Forward, FORWARD*, onward rushed the "boys in blue" with irresistible force and purpose, while the rebels, astonished and dumbfounded, popped up from their hiding-places and sought safety away up the terraced heights where Lee himself, secure behind his treble line of ramparts, grimly surveyed the scene below. Reaching the summit of the first terrace, stout opposition was made, and the din of warfare raged furiously—but the contest was unequal and could be of no more avail than the heaving of the sea-billows against the rock-bound coast. Still spirit was evinceed,

a determined and reckless daring displayed, which might well make the rebel host feel that when the real battle should commence the struggle would be desperate. In this spirited affair our Drummer was struck near the knee by a minnie ball; but it being merely a flesh-wound, he stopped not. Among the foremost, he once got mixed with the rebels, and they gaining a temporary advantage, he found himself virtually a prisoner. His tactical shrewdness again assisted him out of the difficulty. Tumbling down on the ground, right in the midst of mud and blood, he seemed to be dead, and so very quiet did he keep that several rebels gazed upon him and called him dead, remarking that "he was mighty young and mighty small for a soldier, and that he must have had a right smart of pluck, and that it was a pity

he was dead." Soon they were forced back by a renewed assault from our troops, and the rebels were astonished to see him soon after rolling down the slope to the Federal line. Again the hills resounded with cheers for the Drummer-boy, and his escape was considered miraculous. After wiping the blood away from his wound, and bandaging it, he went down into the city rambling among the smoking ruins and going through several of the houses left standing, in search of relics. Among other prizes which he bore away, was a large clock. This he took to his own regiment. His comrades all cheered him as he trudged into camp with his load, and some laughed at him immoderately, others said they heard he had made a hero of himself and been killed as a penalty for it. He received their jokes complacently, told them all about his part

in the affair, and wound up by declaring that "the rebel bullet was not made yet to kill him." They then complimented him for his bravery, and told him that he had won glory enough for one day and that he had better stay with them. Still excited and flushed with the proud name he had that day gained, he heeded not this advice, but again crossed the river, and this time brought back as a trophy a very rich silk Confederate flag. He now cooled down somewhat, the excitement which had nerved him passed away, and the reaction, so prostrating, so weakening, set in, and in a few hours after he was in bed with a high fever. And thus ends his share in the great battle of Fredericksburg. And it was enough for so young a boy, now but thirteen. His fame was a golden one, and the news of his exploits flashed all

over the land on the lightning-wing of the electric wire. The public press teemed with glowing articles on the display of such heroism and daring, and pointed the moral that, our country teeming with boys in whose bosoms were germinant the same seeds of patriotic devotion, could never be conquered by a rebel or a foreign power, and gloriously re-echoed with all the enthusiasm incident to a Fourth of July anniversary, the sentiment, "That there is hope still for America!"

The country alas! knows too well, too sadly well, how vain was the valor displayed by our troops on the 13th of December, when the grand assault was made and proved so signally a failure. Death held high carnival all that day in front of the rebel position. Not a rebel work was taken; not a rebel gun was captured;

but near twenty thousand of our brave men strewed the terraces, the plateaus and the streets of the city. For two days after this, cannonading was kept up, and the rebels led to believe that the assault would be repeated; but on Monday night, the 15th instant, the entire army quietly, silently withdrew, the pontoons were taken up, and the campaign ended.



CHAPTER X.

THREE weeks after the battle of Fredericksburg Robert was again discharged for disability on account of sickness. Whither should he go now? What should he do? The record of the past was all-glorious. His dreams of the future were strange and perplexing. They shifted and ran into each other like the showman's dissolving views; but it was some time before he could definitely decide where to go—whether it were better to return to Michigan, home and mother, or to the great city of New York—a place which his fancy had dressed out as full of high-roofed buildings, crowded and packed into impenetrable closeness, and whose people were all

overflowing with the riches and products brought by the great ships from all parts of the world.

Finally he decided on visiting the great metropolis of America—the London of the new world. In company with some officers going home on leaves of absence, he arrived in New York. Taking an omnibus to the Astor House, he registered his name as “Robert Henry Hendershot, the Drummer-boy of the Rappahannock.” The landlord observing it, said to him, “Are you the Hendershot, the Drummer-boy of whom we have read so much in the papers lately?” He replied, “Yes, sir, I suppose I am. I have heard my name has been in the papers considerably.” Then a crowd of people gathered around and shook his hand and praised him greatly for the gallantry he had displayed, and for the good name he had won in the war of

the rebellion; all of which was very flattering to the youthful hero, and may, perhaps, have made him a little vain.

That night, too, a great meeting was held at the Cooper Institute and he was taken there by some of his admiring friends, and was publicly introduced by the chairman of the meeting to the great sea of people crowded within its halls. The vast audience gave him a hearty cheer, which resounded in deafening echoes around its spacious halls. Winfield Scott, too, was there—that veteran and honored chieftain now no more—and he was introduced to him. The General shook his hand warmly, patted him upon the head, told him he was a little hero, and advised him to resist temptation—not to swear, drink or smoke; but in all things learn to be a man. His youthful heart was touched

with the impressive manner in which the General addressed him, and his words of counsel sank deep into his heart. The meeting over, another hand-shaking was endured, and a great many ladies kissed him.

Returning to the Astor House, he was again beset by a crowd eager to see him, and it was some time before he could escape. And to their shame be it said, many that night tempted him to both drink and smoke; but he heeded well the advice of the old General. He was taken around the city, and to all the newspaper offices and introduced to the editors, and again the country was fired with pride for the boy who was so brave

"By bloody Rappahannock's side."

Our public orators roused the war spirit in our people by dilating on the splendor of his daring

deeds. The clergy commended in glowing terms his behavior in the cause of country, and counseled an equally persistent spirit in the soldier of the Cross. The "Tribune Association" treated him with marked kindness, and informed him that they would present him with a new and much nicer drum—a drum of silver, as compensation for the wooden one he had lost at Fredericksburg.

Poesy, too, contributed her share towards the full meed of praise deserved by the little Drummer-boy; and many a contribution to the public journals, perfect in beauty of language and grace of thought—full of passion and fervor—aided in moulding and developing that lofty patriotism, that sense of self-sacrifice which brought into the field "six hundred thousand more," and finally, under gallant and safe leadership, saved

our country to the cause of freedom, of justice, and of God! Here is one of the excellent pieces, written by one of our sweetest poets, George W. Bungay:

THE HERO OF THE DRUM.

THE drummer with his drum,
Shouting "Come! heroes, come!
Forward march, nigher, nigher!"
When the veterans turned pale,
And the bullets fell like hail,
In that hurricane of fire
Beat his drum,
Shouting "Come!
Come! come! come!"
And the fife,
In the strife,
Joined the drum, drum—
And the fifer with his fife and the drummer with his drum,
Were heard above the strife and the bursting of the bomb.
The bursting of the bomb,
Bomb, bomb, bomb.

Clouds of smoke hung like a pall
Over tent and dome and hall ;
Hot shot and blazing bomb
Cut down our volunteers,
Swept off our engineers ;
But the drummer beat his drum,
And he beat
"No retreat!"
With his drum :
Through the fire,
Hotter, nigher,
Throbbed the drum, drum, drum,
In that hurricane of flame and the thunder of the bomb,
Braid the laurel wreath of fame for the hero of the drum !
The hero of the drum,
Drum, drum, drum.

Where the Rappahannock runs,
The sulphur-throated guns,
Poured out iron hail and fire ;
But the heroes in the boats
Heeded not the sulphur throats,
For they looked up higher, higher,
While the drum,

Never dumb,
Beat, beat, beat,
Till the oars
Touched the shores,
And the fleet feet, feet,
Of the soldiers on the shore, with the bayonet and gun,
Though the drum could beat no more, made the dastard rebels run.
The dastard rebels run,
Run, run, run.



CHAPTER XI.

AMONG other newly formed friends who took a great interest in him, was the Captain of one of our ocean steamers, who invited him to make a trip to Liverpool, the second largest city in England. He accepted the invitation, and on the Saturday following bade adieu for a time to the soil of his birth. His trip across the Atlantic was very pleasant, with the exception of a day or so when the wind, blowing quite fresh, rolled the sea into great round billows, creating very unpleasant sensations, in other words sea-sickness. This over, he was full of enthusiasm, and learned many new things. At night he would stand on the quarter deck for

hours and look up into the sky and admire its beauties. And then as he felt the impressive grandeur of the scene, the immensity of the ocean, the infinity of God, his soul flooded with raptures, welling from its deepest, purest springs. Over head was the moon, full-orbed, and mild, wheeling her onward flight through the heavenly empyrean ; and the stars—the troops of beaming, twinkling stars—so bright, so pure, so profuse in shedding their spiritual magnificence upon man below, that while his crude thoughts became purer and loftier, like the stars above him, and his soul, filled with a longing, unquenchable thirst, inspired by the purity of the majestic heavens, and upborne by the wings of faith, soared aloft and seemed to pluck from the very stars—those divine intelligences—that religious spirit which, pure and undefiled, untrammelled by

the dogmas of sects, alone proves the soul's elysium—the soul's immortality.

Around and beneath him was the sea, the deep-toned sea, rolling restlessly its great green waves, murmuring like the sea-shell the song of its endless toil. On its surface was reflected the starry host away above in heaven's azure vault, and as he gazed upon these, he thought the sea and sky were one—formed in joint communion, which no earthly power could break—none but that of Him who orders all things well. And there, too, was the ship, so symmetrical and so grand, to whose staunchness he had intrusted his life, plunging through the foam-crested waves, huge volumes of smoke rolling from her pipes, emblematic of the mighty power within her, and every yard of her snowy canvas spread, as she speeded nobly to her far-off destination.

Thoughts from these inspirations are positive and commanding. Power and love mingle in them. They open wide the heart, enlighten the understanding, and woo the affections. They smooth the rough corners of life, and soften its asperities. They become like those

“Elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five words long,
That on the stretched forefinger of all time
Sparkle forever.”

And could such scenes, such thoughts as these, fail to ennoble the growing mind and heart of our Drummer-boy? It was generally past midnight when he retired to his state-room and sought the balm of slumber; and he was up in the morning, refreshed as a lark, in season to behold the sun rise from his oriental couch, imparting glorious colors to the heaving sea.

At length Cape Clear was passed, and the Irish Sea was entered. Soon after, with the aid of a glass, Caernarvon appeared sparkling like a ruby on the rough coast of Wales. Old Snowdon, too, raised aloft his hoary brow, and the morning sunlight bestowed upon him a blessing. And away in the night Rose Light was announced, glad word to those who have tired of the voyage, for Liverpool lies close at hand, only a few miles up the Mersey. By morning the steamer lay along side of the quay; and then came farewells among the passengers, and our hero came in for a goodly share (for he had become a favorite among them), and the separations—some to their homes, or the homes of their kindred in different parts of England or Scotland, and others to make a trip on the continent.



The Captain who had treated his little guest with great courtesy, now took him ashore, and introduced him to several very wealthy and influential merchants, telling them who he was and what a great name he had won by his daring feats in the war. They in turn treated him like a prince, invited him to ride with them, and showed every thing of interest in that great city. He visited the great St. George's Hall, a truly magnificent structure, and one which, for completeness in design, proportion and finish, has but few, if any, equals. The citizens point with pride to this noble edifice, and exultingly, almost declare that it stands peerless, aye,

“Unapproached, unapproachable.”

The Exchange, too, shared his attention. This is a fine quadrangular structure, inside of which

is a court. This court is surrounded by a range of columns or porticos, with marble pavements. In the centre stands a lofty and beautiful monument to the immortal Nelson, resting upon a very heavy base, elaborately sculptured on each side with figures and devices of various scenes—the events of his life. It was he who exclaimed to his men as he was about engaging the enemy in that terrible conflict: "THIS DAY ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY." Our hero imagined the enthusiasm which these words must have had upon the English tars, and he spontaneously uttered, "AND SO TO-DAY AMERICA EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY." A noble utterance, worthy so brave an American youth!

He also visited the spacious town hall, the post-office, supported in the centre by huge Ionic columns, the Seaman's Home, and the Zoological

Gardens. He roamed around and through the gigantic docks and warehouses, and saw the piles of merchandise, cotton, corn, wheat, flour, wine, and the products of every clime upon which the sun shines. He saw the immense forest of shipping, extending as far as the eye could reach, carrying the flags of every nation—ships, steamers, tugs, lighters, and wherries. He saw the mechanical establishments for the working of iron, copper, lead and brass—the great factories for the manufacture of cotton and woolen goods, and he felt that surely Liverpool is the New York of the Old World.

The steamer was now ready to return to New York, and so he bade good-by to his many kind friends, and in the evening silently glided down the Mersey and gazed upon the fast-receding land. Soon all disappeared—the great city with

its masts, and spires, and palaces—the shore with its villas, villages and

“ All its solemn imagery of rocks
And woods.”

Nothing of interest transpired on the homeward voyage, and our description of the outward trip will suffice for this. Early in the New Year of 1863 he was moored safely in New York bay. Providence had been his guide, averting all troubles and dangers. O, how rapturous the emotion that filled his mind upon the first sight of his native land, after a month of absence! What scenes rushed upon his memory! What queries pressed for answer! How proud he felt when he touched the shore again!



CHAPTER XII.

UPON arriving in New York our hero was heartily welcomed by his numerous friends, and for a few days enjoyed their hospitality. Then he made a flying visit home, and again astonished his mother by his sudden presence. She was deeply affected with the simple story of his experience, and the manner in which he had been honored by so many distinguished citizens of the country; and her heart again swelled with noble and womanly pride as she strove to realize that all this fame was true. Then she thanked God for the protection which he had thrown over him and her, and that all her fears for her son's life and good name had been happily dispelled—by no illusive hope, but by a realization

which proved him honest, noble and heroic. Many an anxious night had she passed, smothering a grief which the eye of the Omniscient only saw; but now her tribulations and sorrows were over, and her soul, serene in faith, looked upwards through the storm-cloud and saw the stars in heaven's own blue, emblematic of peace, and joy, and love.

His ambitious nature was now fully aroused—never more to be cramped into the circumscribed sphere of action afforded by a country town—and so, after a few days spent among his numerous friends, he hastened again to New York to receive the drum which the “Tribune Association” had promised him.

This drum was manufactured by Wm. A. Pond & Co., of New York, the famous makers of military musical instruments, and whose drums

and German silver fifes have throbbed and piped on many a battle-field.

The shell of this beautiful drum is of German silver, elegantly polished, and having all the glow of pure silver; the hoops are of solid rosewood; both the batter and the snare heads are made of transparent calf skin, so clear one can read through them; the braces are of a new and unique pattern, with a German silver crest on each cone; the snare-fastener is of German silver. On the body of the drum is the beautifully engraved presentation inscription of the Tribune Association, which reads as follows:

PRESENTED
BY THE
"TRIBUNE ASSOCIATION,"
TO
Robert Henry Hendershot,

'Of the Eighth Michigan Infantry, for his gallantry at the
Attack on Fredericksburg, 11th Dec., 1862.

Many of our generals, colonels, and subaltern officers received, during the war, presents of houses, stocks, money, swords and pistols as testimonials of the appreciation of the donors, for distinguished gallantry, good service, and gentlemanly deportment as officers and men; but it was seldom that officers of the army or civilians at home ever thought it worth their while to thus signify their approbation of soldierly conduct in the non-commissioned officers and privates of their commands or favorite regiments. They seem to have been regarded as machines—mere automatons on the great chess-board of war—and that any action on their part, however heroic, noble or manly, was a mere incident to their position, and that if any merit had deserved commemoration, it was the guiding, directing hand or will of the commander, upon whom the

mantle of glory or reward should descend. Many are the instances where the humble, private soldier, known to none save the few comrades in his own company or regiment, deserved conspicuous mention for his conduct, but who never received it. This recognition, therefore, by the Tribune Association, of the young but faithful Drummer-boy, is worthy of all praise. For the honor of the country let it not be said hereafter that the soldier is forgotten.

Question him the story of his life;
Of many accidents by flood and field;
Of hair-breadth escapes in the imminent, deadly breach,
And love him for the dangers he has passed,
As he would you, that you did pity them.

P. T. Barnum, so famous throughout the civilized world as a great showman, next took our hero in charge, and for eight weeks he was one of the attractive features of his museum.

He had free access to all the halls, and whiled away the time most pleasantly in examining the many specimens of the natural world, as well as the unnatural, and in answering the many questions with which he was constantly plied, prompted by the admiration and the eager curiosity of the multitudes who gathered there.

Upon the expiration of this service, Professor Harvey G. Eastman, LL.D., President of Eastman National Business College, at Poughkeepsie, New York, one of the most eminent educators and business men in the land, and who has established one of the most popular and useful institutions of learning that ever supported the commercial interests of this nation, generously offered to educate, board and clothe him free of charge. The proposition was gladly accepted, and so, elegantly dressed in a suit of finest blue, trimmed

with red, and carrying his splendid silver drum, he proceeded to Poughkeepsie, accompanied by several distinguished citizens. They were met at the depot by about two thousand students of the Eastman National Business College, besides a large number of people, all of whom had assembled to do honor to the brave little boy. The magnificent cornet band of the institution discoursed familiar airs, charming all with their skillful performances. The school then formed into a procession and marched to the college buildings, where the youthful hero was introduced to the students and citizens generally. The reception was very flattering, but was accepted in a becoming spirit of modest worth.

Professor Eastman kindly took him into his own family, giving him the comforts and necessities of an elegant home. And Robert, in speak-

ing of his generous benefactor, always says in his plain, frank way, "he used me like a son."

He remained here at intervals, pursuing his studies with tolerable avidity, slowly acquiring an education which shall in due time insure the means of support and lay the foundation of his success in future life. But so used had he become to roaming around and seeing the country and the people, that his first essay at learning was confined to a pupilage of five months. While here an incident occurred which proved that he still possessed the same heroism which characterized him on the battle-fields of the Republic. One of the Poughkeepsie papers thus narrated the event:

"As Robert Hendershot, well known as the Drummer-boy of the Rappahannock, was entering the Vassar-street building of Eastman's College in Poughkeepsie, he was set upon by three burglars who had gained an entrance into one of the rooms of the building. One of

the thieves fired two shots at Hendershot in quick succession, the balls striking a Testament in the breast-pocket of his coat, doing him no injury whatever. Hendershot immediately drew a revolver and returned the fire rapidly. During the confusion the burglars made their escape. Upon examination, it was found that an attempt had been made to carry off Hendershot's beautiful silver drum, which was presented to him by the Tribune Association, and a quantity of money belonging to the stationery department of the college. The affair created considerable excitement, and the police are working up the case."

Suddenly he conceived the idea of visiting Washington and paying his respects to President Lincoln. Accordingly he bade good-by to all his friends in Poughkeepsie, and started for the capital of this great Union. In due season he was introduced to the President, who received him with that perfect simplicity which so endeared him to all those who ever had the honor of his acquaintance. That noble man spent some little time in pleasant conversation with him, and gave

him some good advice—words of wisdom, beautiful as “apples of gold in pictures of silver”—words which, we trust, he has treasured in the heart and will use as a polar star, guiding him onward to the noble and the true all through life.

As the interview ended, the President invited our hero of the drum to dine with him. He, awed by the surroundings of the great man, and abashed even by his simple presence, felt that he had not nerve enough to face a table full of honored ladies and gentlemen, and excused himself by saying he thought he was illy clad for such an occasion. The President kindly remarked, as he patted him on the head, “My young boy, it is not the dress that makes the man.” Dinner over, he took his leave, with the kindly regards of the President, who in bidding

him adieu, said, "Robert, if I can serve you in any way, come to me and I will do so."

Robert spent six months in Washington at this time, serving as a messenger in Mr. Spinner's office. Then the old love came back upon him. The idol of glory again stood out in her magnificent proportions, dressed in robes of crimson and gold, radiant with smiles, her head crowned with the wreath of laurel, which only he could wear, who, by daring deeds and chivalrous bearing, had won a name as one of his country's defenders.

Now he entered the navy. He was assigned for duty on the United States steamer "Fort Jackson," Captain Sands commanding, and stationed near Fort Fisher. This officer was much impressed with the carriage of the boy and took kindly care of him. While lying off here an

expedition was planned to destroy some salt works, which lay some little distance inland, and volunteers were called for to consummate the enterprise. As at Fredericksburg, on a much more perilous occasion, Robert was the first to respond. The party pulled ashore in small boats, landed without opposition, and set fire to the works, the few workmen running at the approach of the marines. They then returned to the boats and hurriedly pushed from shore, accidentally leaving Robert behind, who unwiseley had strayed from the party in quest of relics. His dismay was great when, upon reaching shore, he saw the boats a full half mile away. Full of pluck, and not relishing the thought that if the rebels should appear, his probable fate would be death, he swam to an island, and there awaited deliverance. Upon gaining the steamer the loss of Robert

was noticed, and the captain ordered a boat back to find him. As it passed near this island, his shouts attracted attention, and he was speedily freed from his unpleasant dilemma.

Soon afterwards the boat proceeded to Norfolk, Virginia, and Robert was discharged from the service. The name of home sounded sweetly in his ears. The thousand quiet thoughts and endearing associations—rendered the more dear from the contrast of his waywardness—attuned his heart to the full melody of that sympathy which sanctifies the soul, and relieves life of all its dreary features. Then his heart yearned truly for his home, and he felt, if he did not express, the beautiful lines of George W. Bethune:

"Mother! thy name is widow—well
I know no love of mine can fill
The waste place of thy heart, or dwell
Within one sacred recess: still
Lean on the faithful bosom of thy son,
My parent, thou art mine, my *only one!*"

CHAPTER XIII.

HIS stay at home, however, was very short. Hardly twenty-four hours had elapsed before a letter to his mother, from an elder son, informed her that he was very sick. This brother was a member of the Second United States Artillery, and was attached to a division in the Army of the Potomac. The mother's anxiety was very great, and so Robert hastened at once to him and gave him kindly care—those tender assiduities which flow from hearts allied by the chords of love drawn from a common mother's breast—a social love and sympathy which goes far to cheer the heart, enliven the brain, and drive far away the inroads of physical suffering.

His brother soon recovered, and then Robert

devoted himself to the generous task of nursing the wounded who had fallen while so stoutly and bravely fighting in the battles around Richmond; but this tender mission was soon suspended—for one day, while visiting a friend who was stationed in Fort Steadman, near Petersburg, the rebels attacked it, and a desperate battle ensued, during which he and his friend were taken prisoners and sent to Libby Prison in Richmond. They remained there together for a month, and then Robert being a mere boy, was allowed to come out and walk around the prison. They soon made overtures to him to enter the rebel army as a drummer, and thinking it a speedy way of getting home again, he enlisted under the "Stars and Bars," and was at once sent to Petersburg. The very first night after his arrival at the front he

crawled through the rebel picket line and over into the Federal, when he was arrested; but upon proving himself the Drummer-boy of the Rappahannock, which was no difficult task, he was released, and at once repaired to Washington.

He put up at the Kirkwood House, a first-class hotel then kept by C. C. Sprig, who extended every kindness to him free of charge. Here he remained for two weeks, moving daily among the "stars" and "eagles," which, content with the empyrean height attained, and surfeited with the glory gained, mistily glimmered and wheeled in their particular orbit of Washington society, like the meteor's flash, kindling a flame of admiration for an instant, and then passing away into the depths of the great unknown forever.

Fortune next drifted him into a news-agent

on board the steamer "James T. Brady," which runs regularly between Washington and City Point. While in this business he greatly aided the soldiers in procuring the boxes of nick-nacks and goodies sent them by the loved ones at home.

Then he visited his brother again in the Second Artillery, and was with him in Sheridan's famous battle of the Five Forks, the last engagement of the war, and gained additional laurels for his heroism and kind-heartedness. He was with General Custer, and in the thickest of the fray. In one of the rebel charges he was run over, but again played possum, lying motionless, as if he were dead. Soon Custer's invincible host charged the rebel van, driving it like sand before the wind, and Robert, once more secure, returned to life. His unremitting

attentions to the wounded in this affair won him troops of friends, and the chief surgeon, in behalf of the wounded, made him a present of a beautiful silver watch and a pistol. On the inside of the watch was engraved quite neatly, the work of some soldier, the following inscription: "Presented to R. H. Hendershot, Drummer-boy of the Rappahannock, for his kindness and services to the wounded soldiers of Sheridan's Cavalry, on the 3rd of April, 1865."

Among the many characteristics of the soldier, generosity is perhaps the most prominent and the most impressive. However knotted and gnarled may have been his heart when at home, even though a kindly emotion may never have welled from his bosom, yet when the rough experiences of soldier life—common trouble and danger—have developed his character, he will

sympathize deeply with those in distress, and divide his last penny with the unfortunate—the rich fruit of a harsh culture, ripening and cracking like the persimmon under the influence of the cold and wintry frost. And the spirit of gratitude exemplified by these brave men in thus giving our Drummer-boy such tokens of esteem, is evidence strong "as proof of Holy Writ," that they are not forgetful of those endearing acts which so knit together heart with heart in mystic bonds of love.

Now that the war was ended, and the birds caroled their songs of peace, and the voice of the turtle was heard in the land, now that the strong muscle, the indomitable resolution, the unshrinking courage were no longer required to maintain the honor of our starry flag and the perpetuity of the government, Robert again re-

turned to his kind benefactor at Poughkeepsie, New York, and resumed his studies. At length, Mr. Eastman's famous band made a musical tour through the Middle and Western States, and Robert accompanied them as a drummer. The band won high encomiums from the people and the press of the country. This trip over, he accepted a very kind offer of Reeder Smith, Esq., of Appleton, Wisconsin, to live with him, and pursue his studies in the academic department of Lawrence University.

Appleton is a beautiful town, and nestles lovingly on the banks of Fox River, a stream bordered with scenery as classic as that of the Arno, and abounding with legendary lore as touching as the most pathetic in Hiawatha. And here, too, Lawrence University—the benefaction of two liberal and noble men of Massachu-

setts, Appleton and Lawrence—rises from amidst a mass of leafy foliage, like a grand Pharos of white stone.

He remained here but one term, but this period is among the brightest epochs of his young eventful life. Mr. Smith had a boy named Lawrence, a lad the same age as Robert, and every Saturday was a holiday with them. They generally went hunting or fishing, and frequently some episode occurred, full of exciting interest and even of danger.

One bright morning the two boys, jubilant in spirit, and with a basket laden with a nice lunch, started on a fishing excursion up the river towards Lake Butte des Morts, a wide expanse in the stream, abounding with fish of excellent quality. They trolled for some time with excellent luck, placing in the bottom of their boat about fifty

elegant pike and black bass. It was nearing sunset when they started for home. Lawrence first took his turn at rowing. The boat was very long and narrow, but little better in fact than a dug-out, and as Robert was relieving Lawrence at the oars, it struck a snag and capsized. The predicament was laughable. The boat was bottom up, the oars and the fish all drifted down stream. Robert's gun sank instantly to the bottom, while both boys floundered in the water, but being good swimmers, they were not afraid of drowning. Lawrence struck at once for the land, while Robert worked the boat off the snag upon which it had poised, and pushed it ashore, not far distant. This done, he thought of the oars, and swam out for them. They then tipped the water out of the boat and rowed into the stream, picking up the fish. Finally

these were captured. And then came an anxiety to save the gun, for it was a splendid fowling piece, and a great favorite with him. For a moment a shadow of despair darkened his heart, even as the passing cloud obscures the sun, and then disappeared forever. A new thought occurred to him. He could dive down and get it, and he would do it. *Purpose* declared this, and *will* achieved it. The third effort was a success. Full of glee, he sang merrily that song so familiar with school-boy days,

"If at first you don't succeed,
Try, try again."

His conquest was complete, or nearly so, as the only articles lost were his hat and a pair of boots. Home was reached without further mishap, and a nice warm supper awaited them. Lawrence's mother evinced great surprise when

they came in, their clothes loggy with water, and at once divined that some accident had befallen them. The adventure was related with all the vim natural to youth, and was ended with a word of caution for the future from the parents.

He remained in Appleton, Wisconsin, only during one term of school, and then bade his kind friends and patrons, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, adieu. Proceeding to Poughkeepsie, he tarried a little time with Mr. Eastman; and on the 1st of July returned to Michigan. On the Nation's Holiday he visited Detroit, and was unfortunate enough to lose his pocket-book, containing fifty-seven dollars, at the hand of one of the light-fingered gentry. He informed the Honorable Mayor of his loss, and that kind-hearted gentleman, with whom the Drummer-boy was a great favorite, because of the honor he had gained as

one of Michigan's sons, failing to recover the money, generously started a subscription among his friends and promptly made the loss good. From Michigan he visited Boston, and spent several days with Mr. Emerson, so eminent for his acquirements and scholarship. From here he visited General A. E. Burnside, his former commander, and now Governor of the State of Rhode Island. This noble-minded man received and treated him with great consideration, and upon his leaving for Philadelphia, gave him a letter of recommendation—the strongest one it is said that he ever gave a boy.

The famous National Union Convention was then in session, and Robert was a constant witness to its proceedings, and made the acquaintance of many of its members, both from the North and the South. Thence he returned to Michigan

where he quietly remained in the enjoyment of the society of his mother, relations and friends—especially that of an uncle, Robert Hendershot, a farmer, who resides near Monroe, and who had a magnificent span of horses and a carriage, which were placed at his disposal, and with which he enjoyed many a ride in company with the fair damsels in and around that beautiful little city.

On the fifth of September he came to Chicago to attend the ceremony of laying the cornerstone of the Douglas Monument. Here he met the Presidential party, and at the invitation of General Grant and Secretary Seward, he accompanied the party the balance of the tour to Washington City. He is now preparing to enter the West Point Military Academy, to which he was designated by the lamented Lincoln, that great statesman and patriot; him whom the

renowned in the field, the forum, and the pulpit all loved and admired; him who, though towering on the pinnacle of a nation's greatness, did not forget from how humble a source he had risen, nor fail to stoop down from that glorious elevation and extend his hand, electric with the loving sympathy of his heart, and say, "Be of good cheer. Persevere in well-doing, and thou shalt yet win happiness and honor." It was the last appointment to the Military School which he ever made. Robert felt the blow most deeply when the dread news came that his and the people's idolized President had fallen a victim to the assassin's hand. And when martial bands, steeple, tower, and minute gun pealed forth the deep anthem and funeral knell of the dead, the great departed, no oppressed heart uttered a sincerer sigh of sorrow, no eye let

fall hotter tears of sadness. Ah! death, thou art inexorable. Thy shafts assail and destroy the noblest as well as the meanest, the purest as remorselessly as the vilest. How sweet then the consolations afforded by a belief in the holy faith of God.

"They who die in CHRIST are blessed—
Ours be then no thought of grieving!
Sweetly with their GOD they rest,
All their toils and troubles leaving:
So be ours the faith that saveth,
Hope that every trial braveth,
Love that to the end endureth,
And through CHRIST the crown secureth."

The great man has gone, but the principles which he has inculcated and enforced shall live forever. The casket is destroyed, but the jewel is imperishable. The bow is broken, but the arrow has reached its mark. Abraham Lincoln

is indeed dead, but the influence of his virtues, his high moral character survives, and will continue to exercise a controlling power in the legislation of the nation, as the sunset sky, when the orb of day has set, still shows the glowing traces of its warmth and beauty.



CHAPTER XIV.

OUR task is done. The narrative of the brave Drummer-boy is completed. The record is glorious for one so young, and should quicken with pride the hearts of our people. Our young folks can read it with interest and profit. It inculcates a two-fold lesson. The earlier weaknesses and foibles should be condemned, while the love of country manifested, the enthusiasm of youth displayed, the daring deeds of battle performed, are most worthy of remembrance and emulation.

And now that the rebellion is ended, thousands of noble acts of heroism, duty, devotion, sacrifice, and humanity performed on the battle-field and in the hospital will be written out—grouped,

defined and analyzed—lending a fresher glow to our national fame and prowess than it has ever before attained.

It is opportunity that has thus distinguished America, placing it to-day first and foremost among the nations in all the essentials of its being—its institutions, its nationality, its nature, and its life. It is this great motor which enabled our people, when a few men, in their hatred to New England Puritanism, to freedom and liberal institutions, stirred up an insurrection to establish the political sanctity of American Slavery, to crush out, and forever, every vestige of the giant barbarism, so that now our land is “free in reality as in name,” the National Constitution, our Magna Charta of rights proclaiming in letters of living light the annihilation of this great wrong. Opportunity has proved

that a Republican Government is capable of maintaining itself against internal dissensions and out-breaks, however great, and that the argument of despotic and monarchical power, that in war we should lack the centralization necessary to such an emergency, has been forever silenced from the fact that in this desperate conflict, just terminated, our people—educated and intelligent—sustained the national power, vindicated the integrity of the Union, extended its constitutional authority to meet every new trial, and that, too, without the least curtailment of private rights, and without the least disturbance of that just equilibrium which constitutes the true harmony, prosperity, and perpetuity of our institutions. Opportunity has placed us in the van of nations, in the advancement of science and art, and our inventive talent in the construction of

monitors, ordnance, camp-equipage, and the *matériel* of war in general has astonished and confounded the world.

In our terrible fratricidal strife nothing has gone backward. Every new development has been aggressive and progressive. Olden landmarks, olden ideas, old prejudices have all been set aside, and the nation has steadily and sturdily advanced on the high road to moral and intellectual greatness. The Christian and Sanitary Commissions and the benign nobleness and devotion of our women have exerted untold and incalculable power in this behalf.

Who then shall say our country shall not live, and its beneficence and power for good be felt until the "last syllable of recorded time?" Well may we declare the language of an English poet, in addressing his own country,

"The grave's not dug where traitor hands shall lay,
In fearful haste, thy murdered corse away."

Let the unexampled growth of our country in the past, its wonderful endurance in the present, its untold and immeasurable field for future usefulness, and honor, and glory, illustrated by the examples of our history, and enforced by the precepts of all that is generous, exalted and pure, be deeply instilled into the hearts of our youth, in each succeeding generation, through all coming time, and there need be no fear but that our government, which is, to quote the words of our martyred President, "the last best hope of the earth," will be perpetuated and become as enduring as the earth itself. And God, in the exercise of his mysterious will, ordaining all for good, shall suffer it to stand a beacon of hope to oppressed humanity every where,

an intermediary alembic, uniting the frailties of the mortal with the Christian self-assurance of the Immortal. Thus may it be ever active, ever onward, and to use the sweet simile of Dante in his Vision of Paradise

“Like a wheel
In even motion, by the love impelled
That moves the sun in heaven and all the stars.”



